THE Hudson REVIEW

JOHN BERRYMAN:
Shakespeare at Thirty

RICHARD CLAY:
Rain on Prize Day—a story

E. S. SELDON:
A New Writer: The Marquis de Sade

LOUIS O. COXE:
Beddoes: The Mask of Parody

SAUL BELLOW:
Mintouchian—a story

POETRY BY JOSEPH BENNETT, PHILIP BOOTH, RICHARD EBERHART, ISABELLA GARDNER, W. S. MERWIN, WILLIAM MEREDITH, HERBERT READ.

ARTICLES AND REVIEWS BY THOMAS BARBOUR, ROBERT FITZGERALD, R. W. FLINT, NORTHROP FRYE, JOSEPH KERMAN, GERALD WEALES.

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Notes on Contributors

W. S. MERWIN'S *Meng Tzu's Song* appeared in Vol. I, No. 1 of this Review. Since that time, his poems have appeared regularly in THE HUDSON REVIEW and other magazines. His first book of verse, *A Mask for Janus,* was published last year in the Yale Younger Poets Series and two of his verse-plays have been performed over the BBC. He is finishing a second book of poems.

JOHN BERRYMAN was the Oldham Shakespeare Scholar in the University of Cambridge in 1937. Shorter versions of his present essay were given as a Hodder Lecture at Princeton in 1951 and an Elliston Lecture at the University of Cincinnati in 1952.

Sir HERBERT READ'S *The True Voice of Feeling* has just been published by Pantheon.

A new book of poems by RICHARD EBERHART, *Undercliff,* is to be published in the Fall by Oxford.

Lcdr. WILLIAM MEREDITH, on active duty with the U. S. Navy, is a carrier pilot flying from the *USS Valley Forge* off Korea.

ISABELLA GARDNER and PHILIP BOOTH are young poets whose work has appeared in various publications.

SAUL BELLOW'S *Mintouchian* is a section from his novel *The Adventures of Augie March,* to be published in the Fall by Viking.

LOUIS O. COXE is a poet and playwright; this is his first published essay.

An article by JOSEPH KERMAN on *The Rake's Progress* will appear in an early issue of this Review.

THOMAS BARBOUR is a writer and actor who lives in New York City.

ROBERT FITZGERALD lives in Connecticut and has a Guggenheim Fellowship for work on a translation of the *Odyssey* into English verse.

E. S. SELDON has been at work for several years on *The Universe of Sade.*

GERALD WEALES is a member of the English faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

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The Hudson Review

EDITORS: *William Arrowsmith, Joseph Bennett, Frederick Morgan*
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W. S. MERWIN

Tower

Now I have come again
To the common country
Where all faces are mirrors and tell me
I return white-faced as the dawn.

Have I outrun belief
And walk in a superstition?
Ignorant and alone
Without haste I went only

Among the innocent
Noon-laden fields, then
Among thickets, the way growing
Black and white and thorny,

And at the cockshut hour
—The summer dusk among
Its hedges drowsing—came
Upon the odor of apples,

Upon a darkling tower
Hung with no flutter of birds,
Puff of smoke or banner;
And when I called

No echo stirred nor answer,
Pin nor shutter, only
By the door a hanging wheel
In no wind was turning slowly.

Round and still as a finger
Lain upon lips, stone
Above stone, the tower. Its shadow
Fell as far as evening.

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Dark spool wound within silence,
Ringed with stillness as with trees—
Birches stood hushed in the green air,
And moat-lapped apple trees.

Polished were the dark stones;
As ice they rose. Is it
That there the crevices
Run at neck-level always,

That where that water stands
Almost as ice, the rippling
Tails of salmon cut
The throats of all reflection?

I saw my body
As a smooth alien
On stones and water walking
Headless, not noticing;

And my head, drifting
Bereft of body, gave me
Again from every stone
My astonishment.

A pebble might have rung
A crash of seven years' portent,
On that water falling.
Or turn away the face.

But there was enough of portent
Folding that stony bobbin
If the failing light could limn
And limb such legerdemain.

And what if all motion
Were a web into that stance
And all shattering
But served that severance?

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I cannot learn from mirrors
Or faces of this country
Which of me, head or body,
Still fronts itself there,

Still winds in unmoving dance
About itself while the shadows
Turn alike about flesh,
About stone, about trees,

Till dizzy would the wind be
If wind there were; and yet
No apple falls, nor the green
Light like leaves from the trees;

And from somewhere unseen
The deceitful magpie sings,
"Love, love, o lover,
O King live forever."

Runes For A Round Table

Gemini

He sinks when I rise,
He laughs when I die;
We twain are single
As the same rain falling
On two sides of a tree.

Taurus

White as a flower,
As a floating flower,
As a white child,
Eleven kings I wield;
Afloat in gentle water,
I trample on what is,
I am what is to be.

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Aries

I bear suspicion
Like a golden fleece,
And horns like auguries
Curling into nothing;
On these the world has wheeled.

Pisces

Let the stars quaver
In night blue as a pool;
I rise, though the tide fall,
I turn, but I am still
And wiser than any water
In the eddying sky.

Aquarius

This is faithbearing:
All seas turning
On one's shoulders, to stand
Patiently as though painted
Though the fish be gone.

Capricorn

Where darkness is
Once a mirror was
And I therein was king.
Bearded, lecherous,
Still I stand recalling
The windy cities
Like reeds wailing.

Sagittarius

All quarry flees. The arrow
Drawn always to my ear I still
Have not let fly, and yet they fall.

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Scorpio

All unbidden
I offer an island;
Let the bidden man
Turn, flee like a season;
Mine is the turning end;
My bitterness, immortal,
Finds the mortal heel.

Libra

One man confronting two,
Each side on twelve legs walking,
Yet is no balance between:
The one outweighs the two,
For all hands are uneven
But the wheel is equal.

Virgo

Not so much as a song
In my most silver dream
Has ravished my ear.
Damage by beast and man
And by the scandalous sun
Sing out, but I am not there.

Leo

What greater ravage
Than this: to become
The multiple shield
Of the gilt marauder,
To hold a honey-comb,
Whose taste was for rage.

Cancer

Multitudes bow to me
On shores where no wave bows,
To me who slip sideways
In the heat of the day
With the blank stars for sand.

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Fable

I am a mad precarious man
Making a prayer for folly
At the midnight and heartless hour,
Moon-beset, and my best of prayer
Is incontinently to complain
Upon a foolish story.

Long ago in a laurel wood—
Pray for the love of folly—
Once a lover, and he heartless,
And his lady, heartless likewise,
Loving, but without heart, there stood,
And they wept grievously.

He said: As though with a heart I grieve—
Pray for the poor in folly—
That we in whom great love there is
Should love less well than loveless bodies,
For scarcely do we dare to love
Lest we love heartlessly.

She said: Some stint there must be done—
Pray for the lips of folly—
For how should we this pain abide
As thorough as though hearts we had,
Yet suffer and love as though alone,
However entwined we be.

So they one heart between them made—
Pray for the hands of folly—
Of all heat and belief they knew,
For the sustenance whereof they two
Made tributary their own blood
And rejoiced heartily.

Dark it was in the laurel wood;—
Pray for the eyes of folly—

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A noise as of a breathing beast
Swung between them; when they kissed,
All about them it raged and played,
But nothing could they see.

Reverence overcame them then—
Pray for the heart of folly—
That they out of mere need could make
From nothing and a bit of dark
What had failed them from their creation,
And they sank upon knee.

And most religiously they swore—
Pray for the word of folly—
That never would they look upon
The warm marvel that beat between,
Lest, should their eyes prove so familiar,
It take offense and die.

So they took heart, and the heart, grown wild,—
Pray for the love of folly—
Would lunge on the hollow dark like pain,
And then, till love came round again,
Lie and be gentled like a child
And feed on intimacy.

Almost nine hours they lived at ease:—
Pray for the life of folly—
Yet dawn, ubiquitous, could watch
How they grew curious till each,
Unknown to the other, raised his eyes
Out of their dark and pity.

And saw within the other's eyes,—
Pray for the bells of folly—
Where they all tenderness had set,
Burning upon the day, a great
Bull-shouldered beast with horns of brass
Who cried in fury.

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Who lunged between them like all pain—
Pray for the death of folly—
In mortal rage, till brass and beast
Gored nothing but the ground at last,
And empty, where a heart had been,
Love's body lay.

Ghosts are heartless that tease the blood;—
Pray for the soul of folly—
And ghostly as a coil of rain,
Heartless they stood once again,
Day-stricken in the laurel wood,
And they wept grievously.

I am a sullen unseemly man—
Pray now no more for folly—
Who in the bleak and tolling hour,
Walk like a chime without a tower,
Rending a story, and complain
Heartless and foolishly.

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JOHN BERRYMAN

Shakespeare at Thirty

> We must be content, then, in speaking of such subjects and with such premises to indicate the truth roughly and in outline. . . . In the same spirit, therefore, should each type of statement be received; for it is the mark of an educated man to look for precision in each class of things just so far as the nature of the subject admits. . . .
>
> —*Nicomachean Ethics*

> I am able to make from the springboard the great leap whereby I pass into infinity, my back is like that of a tight-rope dancer, having been twisted in my childhood, hence I find this easy. . . .
>
> —*Fear and Trembling*

SUPPOSE WITH ME A TIME A PLACE A MAN who has waked, risen, washed, dressed, fed, been congratulated, on a day in latter April long ago—about April 22nd, say, of 1594, a Monday—whether at London in lodgings or at a friend's or tavern, a small house in the market-town Stratford some hundred miles by miry ways northwest, or at Titchfield House a little closer southwest, or elsewhere, but somewhere in England at the height of the northern Renaissance; a different world. Alone at some hour in one room, his intellectual and physical presence not as yet visible to us although we know its name, seated or standing, highlone in thought. He is thirty years old today and few enjoy this jolt from decade to decade. It would be an error to imagine him very young. He has been married almost twelve years, has (at least) three children, and Elizabethans age fast. He follows several occupations or trades; "professions" we call them, just as we call each other upon no evidence "gentlemen", but in this age they stand low; in two of them moreover his future must look at the moment to William Shakespeare problematical. In the third he is now sensationally settled and he may not know that he is about to abandon it.

He is first an actor; this must be how he has chiefly got his living so far. In a book soon to appear students agree that it is he who will be described as an "old player" and possibly he has been

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a player for fifteen years. He may thrice have been alluded to in print as one. Let us put aside the two earliest "contemporary allusions" given by Sir Edmund Chambers (who does not believe in them either) as referring not to Shakespeare but to John Lyly ("Willy"), Michael Drayton ("Aetion"), and substitute for them George Peele's vapid couplet in *Edward I*, a chronicle-history published in 1593, wherein Queen Elinor says rather gratuitously and very awkwardly to Baliol, just named King of Scots by Longshanks:

Shake thy spere in honour of his name,
Vnder whose roialtie thou wearst the same.

This phrase is known elsewhere and the text of this play is morbidly corrupt; nevertheless I follow hesitantly the late A. W. Pollard in thinking we appear to have here a punning compliment by the playwright to the actor of the part, especially in view of testimony (1610) that Shakespeare had acted kingly parts. Then from another University wit, Robert Greene, we learned in 1592 that Shakespeare was a player who, intolerably, had set up also as playwright. And from an apology for Greene by his associate, the playwright-to-be Henry Chettle, that same year, we heard an opinion of Shakespeare's acting: it is "excellent". John Aubrey later will tell us that he "did act exceedingly well"—and all this is worth more emphasis than it has received, owing to a tradition that he wrote better than he acted. An unilluminating tradition, for he also wrote better than anyone else has ever acted.

A player then; he plays kings—not Longshanks but Baliol—and other dignified parts (perhaps, as a boy actor he once took female roles). Those parts that will be indicated are still unconceived, Adam in *As You Like It*, the Ghost in *Hamlet*. In the latter play the Prince will have much to say against some current styles of playing, much to say for "a temperance, that may giue it smoothnesse", and he implies, in part of his advice to the Chief Player, a remarkable opinion of the philosophical and social importance of acting, which it will not be very daring in us to suppose that his creator will then hold also: "ore-steppe not [says Hamlet] the modestie of nature: For any thing so ore-doone is from the purpose of playing, whose end both at the first, and nowe, was and is, to holde as twere the Mirrour up to nature: to shew vertue her feature, scorne her owne Image, and the very age

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and body of the time his forme and pressure. . . ." The history of theatrical apologetics contains no encomium or admonition more intense and lofty. But this sentiment, like the style, may lie veiled seven years in the future. So far William Shakespeare must have been apprentice and then "hireling" (not "sharer", or part-owner) in whatever his company or companies were, rising to six shilling a week. Actors, by an ancient statute often renewed, are legally vagabonds—men who if caught masterless are to be branded and put to forced labour—except as they have status being servants to some nobleman or gentleman who protects a company. Just now we do not know that Shakespeare is a member of any company. The theatre is still in such ill repute that a young gentleman has vexed his mother by settling this month in Bishopsgate near the Bull Inn, where plays and players may corrupt his servants. Some private feelings of Shakespeare upon this occupation of his I postpone a little. But he must wonder as he reflects here late in April of 1594 whether he is going to be able to continue to be an actor at all. For a year and a half London's worst plague in generations has forbidden any playing except for one month in winter and a few court performances. Opening hopefully this month, the Rose had to close on the 10th, a Privy Council order of yesterday has again restricted access to court, and Shakespeare does not know that the plague is at last over now for nearly ten whole years. Of course the companies survive by travel in the provinces during plague-time. But their disorganization, notable already from 1588 on, has deepened since 1592. Shakespeare can hardly suppose that an entirely new period of stability is at hand. Indeed he has taken up, during this period of protracted theatrical adversity, a new occupation.

For second he is a poet. I do not mean that he wrote early in his twenties perhaps a large number of sonnets, which he has not printed and will not print for fifteen years more: nor that he writes songs. This is private expression, diversion, not occupation. The Elizabethan poet too has status only when attached; as the poet who greeted Elizabeth for the Earl of Hertford in the entertainment several years past at Elvetham, amid fantastic pageantry, was booted, lest he be imagined "a loose and creeping poet". With the 1200-line *Venus and Adonis,* published a year ago with a dedication to the dazzling young Earl of Southampton, Shakes-

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peare became a professional poet. He seems not to have known Southampton much. "Right Honourable," he wrote, "I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my vnpolisht lines to your Lordship . . . onlye if your Honour seem but pleased, I account my selfe highly praised, and vowe to take advantage of all idle houres, till I haue honoured you with some grauer labour. But if the first heire of my inuention prove deformed, I shall be sorie it had so noble a god-father; and neuer after eare so barren a land, for feare it yeeld me still so bad a haruest. . . ." Poets dedicated often at random, fishing. A few months after, Thomas Nashe dedicated his novel *The Unfortunate Traveller* to Southampton, imitating Shakespeare ("these vnpolisht leaues of mine") but with so little success that in a reprint of this year (1594) he has withdrawn the dedication. Shakespeare's stress upon a coming work suggests, behind conventional modesty, both self-confidence and calculation; a sort of threat, even, being implied (if you do nothing about this honour, you will not hear from me again). His experience must have contrasted with Nashe's, for he is now engaged on the "grauer labour". One reason for our pitching on the present date is that for the first time in his professional life we know exactly what William Shakespeare is doing. He is finishing a second, longer poem, *The Rape of Lucrece*. Just over a fortnight hence it will be registered for printing with a dedication to Southampton widely different in burden and tone from the first: "The loue I dedicate to your Lordship is without end . . . The warrant I haue of your Honourable disposition, not the worth of my vntutored lines makes it [the poem] assured of acceptance. What I haue done is yours, what I haue to doe is yours, being part in all I haue, deuoted yours . . ." What "warrant" the poet has already received, his silent figure does not tell us. But the assurance of this address is as rare, among Elizabethan dedications spanning a social gulf, as was the self-possession of the first, and I think we must take it that a social and financial status never before, perhaps, very promising, has been by the Earl decisively improved. *Venus and Adonis* meanwhile has become one of the celebrated poems of the age; Thomas Heywood, down from Cambridge, is busy with the earliest extant imitation of it (*Oenone and Paris*). *Lucrece* will make its mark instantly. In an elegy upon a lady who died ten days ago, somebody signing himself W. Har. will urge

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Lucrece's poet (and also Cornelia's, Thomas Kyd) to call home from the foreign past their pens for women's virtues and praise Lady Branch. For the wife of the Lord Mayor of London, one of the players' most persistent adversaries, Shakespeare we can hardly expect to respond; but it is instructive that he will never but once or twice respond to such occasions and entreaties, which must have come thick henceforth. Through an age brimming with eulogy and lament, his friends will publish and die, his son will die, Essex fall, Southampton languish in the Tower and emerge, the Queen lie speechless sweating and perish, James be crowned, without poems from Shakespeare. He will begin some time, probably, a third long one, *A Lover's Complaint,* compose a single magnificent enigmatic occasion-poem, *The Phoenix and the Turtle,* throw off six crude lines of epitaph for a wealthy brewer, perhaps some squibs. These are all and more than we are sure of. *Lucrece's* dedication promises nothing further. But a change will take place immediately in his affairs; whether at the moment he plans a career as a poet we can hardly say.

For third he is a playwright, and although there is more to be said for his poems than mid-20th century criticism will find to say, this last is certainly the reason we are looking at him. He sits here as the author of a good many plays, including probably three comedies, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour's Lost,* much of a double chronicle called *The First Part of the Contention between York and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York* (known to us misleadingly as the Second and Third parts of *Henry VI*), and *Richard III.* It is most improbable that all of Shakespeare's early work has survived. For excellent reasons, his escaped the general mortality of plays. Of 250 surviving plays from the three decades 1581-1611 that he might have seen or acted in, one-sixth are his own; two of his are the only survivors we can place readily in the busy theatrical year 1595. But one of his very late collaborations is known to be lost ("Cardenio") and no doubt some apprentice work is lost to us, particularly in its original form. Tantalizing among many plays mentioned later as his are "Love's Labour's Won" (part or most of which may survive under another title), "Iphis and Ianthe" (a subject from one of his favourite works, the *Metamorphoses,* and a form of title he liked), and "King

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Stephen" (a reign, fully treated by Holinshed, which has points in common not only with John's but with those of Henry VI and Richard II). He has doubtless, like other authors, started things and laid them aside. Some of his casual work survives in plays by other men. He has written at least two scenes (ii.4, iv.2) into a stage success, known to us unfortunately as *1 Henry VI,* worked up by Greene and Nashe to capitalize on the popularity of the "Contention" plays by dramatizing the earlier part of Henry's reign; he may have helped an imitator with *Edward III;* and he has lately done a general job of revision, with mocking enthusiasm, on somebody's bloody *Titus Andronicus.* The point of revising plays is that double admission can be charged for plays billed as "new"—an elastic term—and the special point in plague-time is that the impoverished companies can seldom then afford wholly new plays. Plays in fact have been swapping about desperately, as companies go on the rocks and have to sell playbooks, costumes, anything. For the same reason plays are coming this year in numbers into printers' hands; normally, of course, the company that has bought a play from its author wants its use exclusively and so objects to its printing. *Titus* was registered for printing two months ago, on the day of its last performance by Sussex's men (it had belonged earlier to Derby's men, and to Pembroke's). Ten days ago without his knowledge began a raid on work dominantly Shakespeare's, with the registration of a mutilated version of *1 Contention* (or *2 Henry VI*), constructed probably from memory by a minor actor with Pembroke's men last autumn, when that company broke up, for sale to a printer. A similar, vulgarized "report" of *2 Contention* (*Richard Duke of York* or *3 Henry VI*) will follow next year; and meanwhile, ten days hence, will be registered for print something called *The Taming of a Shrew* of which the less said the better, though criticism is finally beginning to agree to regard it as a memorial reconstruction of a lost play which stood behind the later *Shrew*-play part Shakespeare's—the lost play having been itself perhaps part Shakespeare's.

So nearly half his visible dramatic work to date may have been botched. How will Shakespeare feel about it? Philistine biography has an easy answer: he will be indifferent, or concerned at most with the financial loss represented in case he is still associated with

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any of the companies involved. Why not otherwise take authentic versions to his own printer (of the long poems) Richard Field? In passing: the poet's relation with Field, a Stratford contemporary who married well, may just now be deteriorating; it is John Harrison the elder who will enter *Lucrece,* and though Field will print it for him he will also transfer to Harrison next month *Venus and Adonis;* Field for that matter seldom prints poetry for himself. But the real reproof is different and double. Companies own plays, not authors, and anyway the printers of the pirated versions now control the copyrights. Shakespeare could be wild and helpless. Note also that no *original* work of his is yet involved. Later, when his power has increased and original work is infringed, more often than not we will find him active enough when this sort of thing happens. I have been trying so far to avoid general conceptions, or preconceptions. But now that the complacent image of an Apollonian Shakespeare has threatened to disturb our patient enquiry into the situation of this gifted veteran thirty years old, it seems time to draw nearer. It is a question whether we have not found him angry and helpless—but active as well—already.

His manifest public career begins for us with an onslaught by the dying Greene two years ago. Greene was a vain, irritable, red-headed character of thirty-four who when young had written a series of mellifluous romances, which are still half-readable and strongly engaged Shakespeare—their mark is early plain on *The Two Gentlemen.* Greene plastered his title pages with his university degrees. Interested by the triumph of Marlowe's *1 Tamburlaine* in 1586-7, he took up playwriting. Then he turned to realistic pamphlets on sharp practice in London, having deserted his wife for the sister of an important thief named Cutting Ball. Presently he underwent a spectacular and unevenly convincing repentance, displayed in various new pamphlets; of which it is the snarling close of one of the last, written shortly before his pathetic, almost desolate death of a surfeit of wine and pickled herring, that we care about. In order to estimate the force of Greene's attack on Shakespeare we must take note of several conditions: Greene's fame, the publicity of the affair (such that Barnabe Riche, in a work registered soon before Shakespeare's birthday now in 1594, renews the attack), Shakespeare's highly

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probable sensitivity upon the educational score, the social score—and just possibly also upon the score of his name. The name seems to have been a Middle English formation, after the Norman model, for some blustering warrior or over-active sergeant of the law: an imperative nickname.[1] It is immaterial that the first known Sakspere, a William from a village south of Stratford, was hanged in 1248 for robbery, and that the first known Warwickshire Shakespeare was a felon who fled the country. But it is not immaterial, either that just a century before our date a Merton College Shakespeare changed his name to Saunders "quod vile reputatum est", or that the poet himself may have had recourse as a boy to one of his grandfather's variants, Shakeschaft. Greene, who felt himself deserted by the actors his inferiors (though it is not clear what they owed him and he had even on one occasion cheated them by a double sale of a play), was warning Marlowe and other university playwrights away from them, "those Puppets (I meane) that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours." The worst of them, Greene pursued, is "an vpstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers hart wrapt in a Players hyde* suppose he is as well able to bombast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Iohannes fac totum,* is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey." Quite apart the impudent parody of one of Shakespeare's lines in 2 *Contention* ("Oh Tygres Heart, wrapt in a Woman's Hide"), here was a congeries of contempt and slander that might enter into the soul. It is far from clear to me that this is not a main slander handled in the sonnets of Shakespeare, particularly the last two of the extremely bitter trio 110-11-12. 110 speaks with self-contempt of his "motley" occupation, but in 111 the emotion has swung to an access of self-pity, with a special complaint:

> *O for my sake doe you with fortune chide,*
> *The guiltie goddesse of my harmfull deeds,*
> *That did not better for my life prouide*
> *Then publick means which publick manners breeds.*
> *Thence comes it that my* name *receiues a brand,*
> *And almost thence my nature is subdu'd*

[1]Earlier speculation has been superseded by J. Hoops of Heidelberg in *Studies for William A. Read,* 1940, 67-87; even Henry Bradley's.

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To what it workes in, like the Dyers hand,
Pity me then, and wish I were renu'de.
Whilst like a willing pacient I will drinke
Potions of Eysell gainst my strong infection. . . .

And 112 begins:

Your loue and pittie doth th' impression fill
Which vulgar scandall stampt upon my brow,
For what care I who calls me well or ill
So you ore-greene *my bad, my good alow?*

Though not much addicted to cryptograms, I feel the suggestion as plausible which sees in the otherwise unknown word "o'er-green" an allusion to the name of his tormentor, somewhat as in "out-Herod", the meaning of the clause then being: If you wipe out Greene's insult to what *is* ill in me, my occupation. . . . In these excruciated poems no resort is had to the veneration for playing that will be expressed by Hamlet; instead, a proud nature seems stung to a writhing assent to what is *true* in Greene's charge. This is Shakespeare helpless, in private with one friend. In public he resented the attack so effectively, that within three months Chettle—whom Shakespeare and Marlowe (he says[2]) accused of writing the thing himself—had apologized in the Epistle to a book of his own. Not to Marlowe, whom he does not care ever to meet. But to Shakespeare, whom Chettle when he was preparing Greene's posthumous papers for the press had not met either, but since has met, and is now "as sory [for not having changed the passage] as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe haue seene his demeanor no lesse ciuill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes: Besides, diuers of worship haue reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that approoues his Art." Observe how explicit and comprehensive is this witness in repudiation. To Greene's libel of egotism, Chettle replies with his experience of Shakespeare's civility; to Greene's contempt for the actor, with his judgment not alone of Shakespeare's excellence—by implication, of the worth of the profession or "quality". To dispose of what many contemporaries seem to have taken as a charge of plagiar-

[2]Chettle does not name the men, but their identities, which are unmistakable, have not been doubted.

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ism, owing to a misunderstanding (possibly) of the "feathers" phrase, Chettle then invokes general honourable witness to Shakespeare's character, and not only to this, but to the elegance ("facetious" meaning polished) of his work for the stage. Courtesy, professional excellence, integrity, artistry. A most unusual apology, I think; especially when viewed in the light of an independence that refused any amends whatever to the most famous playwright of the moment. It suggests that William Shakespeare had become more favourably known, was more imposing by 1592, than some careful students allow. And it introduces us to his character. "His character," somebody will exclaim like Tesman in *Hedda Gabler*: "But, good heavens, we know nothing about his character!" No; but there is a thing or two more to be said about it all the same.

What is your physical image for this man I don't know. The first authentic image surviving is the fatuous bust at Stratford, perhaps made from a mask but conventionally made as a sepulchral affair and since butchered (let's mean: brought to resemble a butcher) by incoherent re-paintings over the stone. The third and last authentic image surviving, engraved by a young Fleming in London, half a dozen years after the man's death, for a collection of his plays in folio, you will have seen there or elsewhere and probably hardly admire. If opposite the present page were placed the second authentic image surviving, which is less well known, I think you would be interested. It is again recognizably Martin Droeshout's "immortal piece of inferior engraving", though the head alone, say, without the vile-drawn dwarf's doublet; but if you looked at it with care the other two presentments of the man would fade. This is the first state (or "proof") of the Folio portrait, known in just four copies.[3] Spielmann describes it as that of a frank young English face, with firm delicate features, a gaze calm and observant under fair eyebrows set low. The forehead is bald—perhaps prematurely, perhaps shaved either in a fashion (as were the monks of Iona) or for ease in playing venerable characters; it is broad and massive but lacks entirely the bulbous appearance you are familiar with, and the dark hair grows naturally down from each side of it. There is a slight

[3]The clearest reproduction I have seen, though small, is that of the Bodleian copy in E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: a study of facts and problems*, 1930, ii, plate 26.

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downy mustache, a small lip-beard above a strong smooth chin. Spielmann speaks also of a "characteristic aspect of large sympathy held in control by critical judgment, the strong reserve of individuality". One sees clearly why Aubrey was told that he was "a handsome well shap't man". Beautifully oval, the forehead wide, high, prominent, the jaws not prominent except as rondure, the chin large but round, the face might alone have inspired Mantegazza's catalogue of the characteristic appearance of intelligence. The nose, however, which dominates it, is singular, little broader at the nostrils then down the straight, solid bridge. The upper lip is deeply bowed, the lower full. But what is visible of one ear is so misshapen that I wonder how far we can trust Droeshout in detail. Spielmann believes he worked from an outline drawing of the poet, with flat washes of colour, made when Shakespeare was about thirty.

This, then, is the man we have been looking at. Whether Spielmann's impression of "frankness" will do, I doubt. Years of studying the image off and on have not diminished my contrary sense of its enigmatic character. There are faces that seem *merely* reserved. This speaks, it is all but ardent. Yet, proud without assertion, harmonious, formidable, less than any face I have seen does it yield you up any secret. The ambivalent impression is enforced, perhaps, not checked, by the one anecdote transmitted to us about Shakespeare's father. Somebody once saw the "merry cheekt" old man in his shop—he was a glover—and heard him say that "Will was a good Honest Fellow, but he durst have crackt a jeast with him at any time". With a son only "gentle", companionable, "witty", as his contemporaries tell us Shakespeare was, there would have been no question of "daring" to crack a jest.

Now turn back from this face to the second state of the portrait and see what poor Droeshout has done in his attempt to give it proper age and status as the frontispiece to a folio. He has made the skull hydrocephalous by multi-management of light, lifted the hair like a wig, eradicated a mole on the left cheek, stubbled the chin, puffed and hollowed the under-eyes, achieved at last that hard, foxy, *false* appearance which has gravelled us all and sent so many weak-minded persons scurrying about in search of the "real" (the titled) author. I will not suppose that a poet looks like a poet necessarily, whatever that appearance may be. But *if*

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he does—as Virgil did, we know from the unrivalled mosaic discovered in Tunisia in 1896, and as Shakespeare (it seems) did—it is not only as well to know it but important not to suppose that he didn't. My point, of course, is an analogy. Just as you forget the Stratford bust and Droeshout's rehandling, so it will be helpful if, while recalling as vividly as possible everything you have experienced of Shakespeare's work, you can put out of mind all that you have hitherto known of his character and life. You may know, for example, that Shakespeare was uneducated, his parents illiterate, that he matured very late after a long period in regard to which one guess is as good as another about what he was doing, that he commenced playwright by rewriting other men's plays, that Marlowe was his master, that he followed literary and theatrical fashions, that he did not deal with contemporary events, that he was indifferent to the fate of his work. These are fancies. Some may be true fancies, some false; I think most are false; but all are troublesome because they interfere with the reception of an image which has to be created slowly. At thirty men think reluctantly back over their lives, and we must try how far we can follow him.

Sprung like Virgil and Keats from an unequal match, Shakespeare was the eldest son of a countryman who had married a daughter of his father's landlord, Robert Arden of Wilmcote, moved to Stratford, and prospered.[4] Mary Arden had brought him some property, not much. He cured and dressed skins, made gloves; sold barley and timber; perhaps he slaughtered, and dealt in wool. He was also active in civic life. When the boy was four, John Shakespeare was bailiff or mayor. He signed with a mark and kept the Corporation accounts for years; scarcely anyone now thinks he could not write. Marlowe's father was supposed illiterate, because he signed his will with a mark, until an excellent

[4]When William, christened on 26 April 1564, was born, nobody knows. The popular birthdate, April 23rd, is popular because it is St. George's day, the patron Saint of England, and because Shakespeare died on that day in 1616; that a coincidence with the date of death should have gone unnoticed for a century suggests that it is wrong. Evidently he was fifty-two when he died, although there are difficulties even about this. De Quincey fancied that the date of his granddaughter's first marriage, 22 April 1626, memorialized the birthday, and 'about April 22nd' is the best we can do. This is Old Style of course; New Style, May 3rd or so.

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signature (prior to the will) turned up in 1937. A mark, originally a cross, was ceremonial. Whether William Shakespeare entered the free Grammar School at five or seven is a mystery for all Professor Baldwin's thousands of pages. The least inhuman enquiry into his schooling is still Baynes'; it consisted of Latin; as Baynes wrote the most pleasing account we have of the influence of the Stratford country—woodland north, champaign south—on senses and a spirit preternaturally keen. How long the boy lived there is doubtful. When he was twelve his father's way of life altered. Having missed one Corporation meeting in thirteen years, that is, before 23d January 1577, during the ten years after this date he attended just one. Circumstantial argument lately has failed to shake the evidence that his affairs were declining; but some new evidence has made it clear that he was a Catholic. A testament of faith in his name ("calling to mind . . . that I may be possibly cut off in the blossome of my sins"), found under the tiling of his house in the 18th century, transcribed and lost, is now known to be a translation—brought to England by Jesuit missionaries in 1580—of an Italian testament composed in Milan shortly before. As of a man who had married near the end of Mary's reign, Catholicism must not astonish us, and many Ardens were Catholics. But the heterodox loyalty helps to explain John Shakespeare's withdrawal from public life; and with regard to his son's training it is of real importance, as arguing an alternation of Catholic influence at home and Protestant influence at school—the latter being further complicated, De Groot has shown, by an alternation of Protestant and more or less Catholic schoolmasters. The balance of sympathies which is one of the poet's characteristics had thus a deep root. By thirteen or fourteen we may doubt whether William Shakespeare had any more to learn from the one of his masters about whom we know almost nothing, and the tradition that his father—with five younger children to support—withdrew him from school to work at his own trade is plausible enough. To this age, nothing has been transmitted to us about the boy except that he was eloquent at a dramatic stunt called Killing the Calf (you go behind a curtain and act both calf and butcher). He also had now or later, unless Aubrey was misled, a friend his own age as talented as himself who died young.

Now, I think, begin the so-called "lost years". Why it should

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be thought a conservative estimate that Shakespeare stayed in Stratford until his marriage I have no idea. Throughout life he always returned there from time to time, and very little time is required either for a marriage or the consummation of a marriage. We lose him probably at about fifteen. His marriage in fact, at eighteen, to a woman twenty-six from a hamlet near Stratford, may have been hasty; six months after the license was issued, a daughter was christened Susanna. A nuptial pre-contract amounting to marriage, such as Shakespeare actually mentions in *Measure for Measure,* has been argued for, and it is true that both practice and law were opposed, in this matter, to ecclesiastical teaching. In any event, from the possibility that he had to marry it does not follow that he was unwilling to. Anne Shakespeare's impressions of the poet have not survived. He did not make a faithful husband, and was seldom at home, but he was a husband, of whom it is not too much to suppose that one could readily be proud, and in time he would flourish. Twins followed the daughter by twenty months, early in 1585, and were named after Hamnet (or Hamlet) Sadler, a baker in High Street, and his wife, Judith. There were no more children. A year or so later he seems to have begun writing sonnets.

About a century after these events, a son of an actor who had been with Shakespeare's company in 1598 told Aubrey that the poet "had been in his younger years a Schoolmaster in the Countrey". This would be as an usher, presumably, not schoolmaster proper, and not necessarily for long. A reflection of the supposed experience had been seen in *Love's Labour's Lost* (where Holofernes strikes one as constructed rather from the point of view of a victim than of a colleague—not to mention his immediate origin in the Pedant of the *commedia dell' arte*). It may be. Failing evidence, this remote assertion is really on no better footing than the numberless demonstrations that he was a soldier, or law-clerk, or traveller, or what not. Possible, any of them, but I can imagine nothing more futile than pinning one's faith to a hypothesis which does not even bear upon the fundamental problem: the transition from Stratford obscurity to prominence in the London theatre. Let us reserve our faith or lack of it for frank amusements, like the deer-stealing and horse-holding traditions. Faith is not quite the point in history. I want to indicate

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the four lines of possibility most attractive in the present state of our knowledge.

The first, and most vivid, is northern. In the autumn of 1581 Alexander Houghton died, a Lancashire gentleman who kept players, leaving to his brother Thomas if he will keep players, if not to Sir Thomas Hesketh, instruments and costumes, and specially commending to them William Shakeshafte and another, who now live with him at Lea, evidently players; and leaving this pair of servants also annuities of two pounds. Chambers, who noticed this will in 1923 (*The Elizabethan Stage*) and forgot it in 1930, has lately, jogged by Oliver Baker, taken up the matter again. The Houghtons, and Hesketh at Rufford, were on close terms with the Stanleys, whose great house Knowsley lay just south. Hesketh almost certainly kept players and had them there with him in December 1587. He died a year later. Both the Stanleys—the 4th Earl of Derby and his son Ferdinando, Lord Strange—of course kept players who made up one of the leading English companies, sometimes under one name, sometimes the other. I must enter a little on their history. They played at Stratford in 1578-9 and 1579-80; may have been the unnamed players at Knowsley thrice in 1588-1590 when Lord Strange was there; were eighteen weeks at the Rose with Philip Henslowe early in 1592, giving 23 plays, mostly old ones by Marlowe, Greene, Peele, Thomas Lodge, Kyd (ten performances of *The Jew of Malta,* thirteen of *The Spanish Tragedy*) but five new ones including 'harey the vi', evidently *1 Henry VI,* (fifteen performances); for several weeks early in 1593 they were there again, and five men later to join Shakespeare in the most famous company of the age (William Kemp, Thomas Pope, John Heminge, Augustine Phillips, George Bryan) were with them when they were given a special license in May and went on tour. Derby died in September, and next Spring in the week before Shakespeare's thirtieth birthday, his son died (April 16, 1594). The company used the Countess' name at Winchester on May 16th but in the Summer reshuffled (Edward Alleyn, remaining the Lord Admiral's servant, had been at their head for some time) and parted. If the William Shakeshafte of 1581 is William Shakespeare at seventeen, it is clear that he might have passed readily thence to Strange's men, where most critics used to locate him and some still do, and so to London. Perhaps

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in the present paragraph we have seen Shakespeare lose three or four patrons. This will is the first document ever to appear suggesting, what many have hoped, that he may have been early familiar with a distinguished house; where, they fancy, he acquired the knowledge of books and manners that his plays evince. I see myself no difficulty in his reading (as he certainly read widely) almost anywhere, and I think with Granville-Barker that he learnt about life from writing plays about it. But this Lancashire chance is undeniably interesting. It has been reinforced already by Leslie Hotson's discovery that one of the two men chosen by Shakespeare and four of his fellows as trustees in 1599 was not only a native of Rufford but a cousin of Hesketh's widow, and by Alan Keen's showing that a descendant of this man married a relative of the 18th century antiquary William Oldys whose unfulfilled undertaking "to furnish a bookseller in the Strand . . . with ten years of the life of Shakespeare unknown to the biographers" has hitherto baffled enquiry. The suggestion of Oliver Baker is attractive, that the bequest of a year's wages and the annuity in 1581 may explain the poet's return next year to Stratford and marriage. De Groot's demonstration about John Shakespeare is in the highest degree relevant to all this, Thomas Houghton's widow at Lea being a Catholic recusant (like Southampton's father) and other members of the family suspect. History sometimes really unclouds. The first thirty-five years of George Chapman's life were blank until 1945, when we learned that he was long attendant on a member of the Privy Council, Sir Ralph Sadler, whether brought up by him as Drayton by Sir Henry Goodere, or domesticated later as was Samuel Daniel at Wilton.

A second line of possibility has opened even more recently. An imperfect copy of Edward Hall's chronicle (the edition of 1550) was discovered some ten years ago containing 400 marginalia (about 3600 words) which are claimed as Shakespeare's. They occur mostly over the reigns of Richard II, Henry IV, Henry V. The book was originally owned by Sir Richard Newport of High Ercall in Shropshire, from whose daughter Magdalen, Donne's friend and the mother of George Herbert, it is rather wildly conjectured Shakespeare may have received it, Newport having died in 1570. It wants critical examination, palaeographic and lin-

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guistic. Neither Keen's earlier articles nor Moray McLaren's book *By Me* (London 1949) had much value except descriptive. Keen's last in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library,* March 1951, though unreliable, is better. It is the handwriting that is fundamental; a matter for experts. But I will give one example of other indications that require study. Objecting to Hall's use of an authority, the annotator writes: "The Author (if he dyd write it) wrote it in the afternoone". Probably this means: napping. Shakespeare regularly sees the afternoon as the time to sleep (*Hamlet* i.5.60, *All's Well,* v.3.66, *Tempest* iii.2.96) and even uses the phrase "a sleepy Language". I may mention that neither of the copies of Holinshed claimed as Shakespeare's in 1938 by Mme. de Chambrun has yet been critically examined: a mutilated 1577 edition in the Folger "which remained in his sister's family long after the poet's death", and a Stratford-owned, annotated 1587 edition in which the reigns from Richard II to Henry VII are worn thin at the bottom from thumbing. G. B. Harrison was impressed by the case for the latter. Some critics have long thought he used both editions of Holinshed.

The third line was suggested at the end of the last century by Judge Madden and has been developed by Caroline Spurgeon, in appendices to their important books (*The Diary of Master William Silence, Shakespeare's Imagery*). Shakespeare in *2 Henry IV* knows Gloucestershire remarkably well: games, husbandry, the "sedgie" Severn. By then, if not long before, he had travelled half over England playing; but he names people (who we find lived there) at places near Berkeley Castle, which he also knows not only well (in *Richard II*) but *emotionally,* as Miss Spurgeon has made clear with an analysis of his martlet images; and both he and his wife appear to have had relatives there in the Cotswolds. Berkeley's men played at Stratford in the year before he married and again in the year after he married.

The fourth surmise concerns the Queen's men, the most powerful company of the 1580's. Pollard points out that Shakespeare took over later the materials of at least three of their extant plays, handling them not so much like a man who had read the plays as one who acted in them years before, with a strong grasp of situation but negligible verbal congruity. The objection that he might equally have just seen them acted is more satisfactory, I

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think, with respect to *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* and *King Leir* than with respect to *The Troublesome Reign of King John.* This company mostly broke up on the comedian Tarlton's death in 1588, and the notion receives some support from frequent allusions in Shakespeare's sonnets to the poet's travelling, since it seems likely now that the bulk of these were composed during the years 1586-1587-1588.

Through three and a half centuries up to the publication of Hyder Rollins' enormous Variorum edition of the Sonnets in 1944 hardly anything was discovered about when they were written, and Rollins overlooked the shrewdest suggestion perhaps ever made, that of Fripp's about "o'er-green" which a few pages back I tried to strengthen. This is in accordance with a fatality that seems to dog Shakespearian study. Of "the most expressive man that has existed", the item of correspondence that has survived is a loan-begging letter *to* him, which was never sent. Of England's most effective dramatist, the surviving manuscript is part of a play that was never produced. But from two known circumstances it has never been likely that the Sonnets could be much later as a whole than the poet's thirtieth birthday,—the last line of Sonnet 94 being quoted in *Edward III* (printed 1595) and Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends" being a familiar fact to Francis Meres at some time before September 1598. Into the currently hot controversy (which is weirdly neglecting these two circumstances) I enter here only to explain and a little assist Leslie Hotson's position. Three years ago Hotson took Sonnet 123, of which nobody had ever made any sense whatever, and, proving "pyramid" a regular term for obelisk, argued that the sonnet probably refers to the famous obelisks disinterred by the Pope's order and re-erected at Rome, one each year during 1586-1589. Their celebrity was European; strangers just off the ship, we are told, ran to see the first, the marvelous Needle. Not the poet.

No! Time, thou shalt not bost that I doe change,
Thy pyramyds buylt vp with newer might
To me are nothing nouell, nothing strange;
They are but dressings of a former sight:
Our dates are breefe, and therefor we admire
What thou dost foyst vpon us that is ould. . . .

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The "dated" sonnet so-called (107) about the "mortal moon", had been here and there asserted to refer to the Armada and its defeat in 1588, but assertion is nothing. If the Spanish fleet did not in actuality approach in crescent form, as Hotson supposes, yet that the English thought it did he proves with five quotations calling it a moon (to which, since, others have been added). More cogent still, since 1475 European prophets, Protestants, astronomers had been predicting a doom, a wonder, for '88; and for decades afterward England would rejoice over the catastrophe (designed by some "to be the end of the world"—1631) prophesied and avoided.

> *Not mine owne feares, nor the prophetick soule*
> *Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,*
> *Can yet the lease of my true loue controule,*
> *Supposde as forfeit to a confin'd doome.*
> *The mortall Moone hath her eclipse indur'de,*
> *And the sad Augurs mock their owne presage,*
> *Incertenties now crowne them-selues assur'de*
> *And peace proclaimes Oliues of endlesse age.*
> *Now with the drops of this most balmie time,*
> *My loue lookes fresh. . . .*

In view of the immediacy of the last six lines, it is useless to deny the possibility that Sonnet 107 was composed in the late Summer or early Autumn of 1588. Hotson fancies Shakespeare waited until the year ended, but that balmy rain feels like a summer rain and news of the Armada's conclusive dispersal came early in August. Sonnet 123 follows very well in 1588 or 1589; 124—we will see presently—in the latter half of 1589. But except for two odd sonnets (125-26) these two last end the sequence; all those to Shakespeare's mistress (127-52, followed by two more odd sonnets) having been collected at the end, probably by the 1609 printer, in order to spare the reader as long as possible a story unedifying, the woman being married and also having seduced at one point the poet's young friend. More explicit and savage than those to the friend, these twenty-six belong with Sonnets 40-2. To 107, moreover, is linked backward 106, and to it 105; 104 is the sonnet celebrating three years of friendship with the young man, and I think we may take it, on the present evidence,

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that Shakespeare wrote most of his sonnets during 1586-1588. A few are no doubt later. 110-12 I have placed tentatively in 1592, 125 I should suppose much later. These are misplaced, then. I expect others are. But on the whole the received order is more acceptable than critics (except Chambers) have inclined to allow. The sonnets do not tell a story, still less do they follow a fashion, though a habit of sonnet-writing will produce occasional exercises; they reflect interests, pieces of living, two passions. About twenty-five of them contain passages that lodge them among the most beautiful or most energetic short poems in English. Three or four challenge perfection.

But most of them are very moderately good or bad, and I think their mediocrity has been insufficiently appreciated by those critics who feel strong resistance to an early dating for the Sonnets. On the other hand, one reason for the resistance is probably the excellence of certain sonnets. The critic cannot imagine lyric verse of this quality proceeding from an author who is simultaneously writing dramatic verse so inferior or no dramatic verse at all that has survived. Here we stumble, I believe, on a misunderstanding of the differences between lyric and dramatic verse. Let the critic consider the superiority of the song "Who is Sylvia?" to almost all the verse-dialogue of its play, *The Two Gentlemen.* A similar misunderstanding of the differences between dramatic and narrative verse has led scholars either to set the beginning of Shakespeare's dramatic career much too late, or to fancy *Venus and Adonis* written long before it was printed and to brood painfully over the turgidity of *Lucrece.* Scholars troubled by the poet's allusions to his aging must underestimate either the Renaissance convention or the actual feelings of oldness endured by some young poets, or both. With another reason for resistance to Hotson's discoveries I confess less sympathy. The critic has made up out of nothing long ago, or borrowed, a view which evidence distresses. A man with a distinct idea of what the other side of the moon is like will naturally be disturbed when he arrives. Hotson's case, though itself very difficult, far from being conclusive, and inadequately argued by him, is not only much less unsatisfactory than Professor Harbage's, say, who tries to place in 1603, in the teeth of likelihood, the two sonnets I have discussed; it is the best case we have.

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We have arrived, of course, only at some dates, not at identities. Who the dark-haired woman was God knows; her husband was named Will. There has been no small speculation about the identity of the friend, "Mr. W. H.", to whom the 1609 printer dedicated the sonnets as their 'onlie begetter'. This he was not, but Thorpe was willing enough to keep the woman out of sight. I neglect the considerations positive and negative which ought always to have made it inconceivable that the friend was an earl; since Southampton (and of course Pembroke, forlorn hope) we can dismiss on the score of date. Any gentleman was far enough above an actor. Now we enter the jungle. In the Autumn of 1594 will be printed a tedious work in fluent stanzas, ostensibly by one Henry Willoughby, about how various suitors including himself assail with words the virtue of an innkeeper's faithful wife, Avisa. It is implied that she lives in Sherborne, Dorsetshire, where her husband keeps the George, and she may have been a real woman named Avis. I doubt if she was; it has not been noticed that the name "Avice" was considered by some "detorted from *Hildevig*, that is, Lady-defence" (Camden's *Remaines*). Willoughby, when his turn comes, seeks the advice of his "familiar friend", an "old player", "W. S.", who "not long before" fell in love himself and is just over it. Shakespeare, if this is he, gives some unexceptionable advice, in dull stanzas. The whole work is so earnest and dull that it is hard to see it as aggressive, but aggressive it must have been, considering much hocus-pocus impossible to describe briefly, an even duller counter-attack by one Peter Colse in 1596, and an order of suppression in 1599. I am not sure "Henry Willobie" is an actual Henry Willoughby who went up to Oxford at sixteen in 1591. But his stated initials are H. W. Now Southampton's initials were H. W. (Henry Wriothesley) and Pembroke's W. H., and Southampton may conceivably be satirized in "Willobie". But as of the Friend of the Sonnets both I believe are irrelevant. But we have seen another W. H. ("W. Har." actually) addressing Shakespeare in verse in 1594, and there is a limit to the amount of coincidence I am willing to *conjecture*. Some of these friends and poets ought to be the same. If they are not, perhaps we might declare further coincidence inadmissible. Shakespeare's young friend of the Sonnets was certainly named Will, and I see "Will" in "Willoughby", and

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farther, without evidence, we can hardly go. Of the "rival poet" nothing can be said except that Marlowe is currently leading Chapman in that ghostly race; from which, I think, Kyd ought not to be excluded.

Hotson's case for a third dated sonnet, 124, is less striking in itself than his others, but more significant still when we link its two parts to two topical features correspondent to them in *The Comedy of Errors*. Again both religion and politics are implicated; Shakespeare is coming to seem a more allusive poet, perhaps, than we thought him. The scene for the execution threatened at the end of the *Errors*, Baldwin has contended, fits point to point the execution-stand set up in Finsbury Fields, near the Theatre and Curtain north of London, where a priest was executed in October 1588 (his initials I note with horror were W. H.). If Baldwin exaggerates the psychological correspondence between history's scene and the dramatist's, he makes it appear very possible that Shakespeare's Act V was designed for one of those two theatres at no long interval after the execution, which presumably he witnessed. Now his subject in Sonnet 124 is the difference between his love and other enthroned things such as monarchs: *their* subjection to change of fortune, weakness-in-power, assassination political or religious, *its* invulnerability—

It feares not policy that Heriticke. . . .

In view of this line, Hotson is undoubtedly justified in referring the couplet to the Jesuit-inspired, devout, futile attempts to cut down Elizabeth:

To this I witnes call the foles of time,
Which die for goodness, who haue liu'd for crime.

Yet a sympathy is impressive here behind the theme and verbal condemnation, of interest as our first glimpse of Shakespeare's mature spiritual feeling. We recall his training in balance between the religious parties, as his father had been (and he would be) suspended between social classes, as he stood balanced in some sense, in his twenties, between the sexes (the view by the way that he was ever a practising homosexual is of course untenable). But the earlier part of the sonnet is still more definite than this allusion to Jesuits executed. It uses for metaphor Henri III of France, the "childe of state": whose people rise against him in support of the Duke of Guise in May 1588 ("might for fortunes bastard be

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vnfathered"), who for the rest of the year endures affably a contemptuous, pro-Guise States General and even news that the Guise intends to kill him ("suffers . . . in smiling pomp"), who murders the Duke and is himself monk-murdered in the summer of 1589 —"falls under the blow of thralled discontent, Whereto th'inuiting time our fashion calls. . . ." He had named Henry of Navarre his heir, civil war revived, and to this there is explicit allusion in the *Errors*. "I could find out," confides a Dromio, "Countries" in the kitchen-wench, and to "Where France?": "In her forehead, arm'd and reuerted, making warre against her heire." A minute later we hear of "Armadoes of Carrects", and anyway this quadruple topicality is irresistible; both sonnet and play ought to belong to 1589.

Shakespeare then would seem to have begun writing comedy *at latest* directly after the sonnets. This chronology would account incidentally for what has always seemed to me one of the sonnets' anomalies; he speaks of writing sonnets, of acting, of travelling, of his mistress, of scandal, of a book he gives the friend (77), of a memorandum-book the friend gives him (122), but never of writing plays. Perhaps he began in 1588, at twenty-four. Baldwin and Hotson reinforce each other more impressively, of course, by not knowing each other's work. The trouble with this view of Shakespeare's dramatic outset is that it raises as many difficulties as does the "conservative" modern view that he began only about 1590 with *2* and *3 Henry VI*, and in the face of these difficulties the positive evidence is by no means mandatory. I don't believe we can yet say confidently whether he began with comedy or history.

But the conservative view has for a long time been entangled with a most serious error, the clearing up of which does perhaps enable us to form a more satisfactory image of his dramatic outset than has ever been possible before, *if* he did not begin with comedy. I feel sure, that is, that the editors of the Henry VI plays, H. C. Hart and Dover Wilson, are right in regarding them as not originally Shakespeare's, while current authority is wrong in thinking the two important plays are. What is intolerable about the conservative view is that they are patently by several authors, among these dominantly Shakespeare, but the ground-plan seems in both *2* and *3 Henry VI* to have been laid by somebody else,

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probably Greene. The difficulty with this is that they are so greatly superior to plays of the period by Greene or anybody else (except Marlowe's *Edward II* which follows and imitates them). Consider the superiority alone in theatrical address, the setting up of a story. *2 Henry VI* springs into being as ceremonial, joyous, expectant—the King's bride whom he has never seen is about to arrive—everything looks splendid—then a fact, which we feel as odd, is introduced: she comes without dowry—the King pays no attention—but he is shrinking in our sight as the peers grow tall—a qualm—and suddenly, as the author looses the peers, power is pulling exactly seven ways—in Scene Two, power pulls an eighth way—and under this comparison, none of Shakespeare's rivals seem to have a story to tell at all.

I think the key may be to be found in the length of these plays. One of the things Shakespeare was to revolutionize was play-length. Of 36 plays belonging to 1590-1594, the average length is 2250 lines; of four by Greene, 2200. I expect, as originally written, *2* and *3 Henry VI* were typically inept and strengthless, psychologically primitive, usual-length Greene plays—which Shakespeare expanded into these outsize astonishing dramas (the first over 3000, the second just under) that gave the theatre after *Tamburlaine* its fresh and true start. Now the hard questions have always been, *why* and *how* the young actor did any such thing. How came he to? Who let him? Who but the other actors? What actor would not have in his part, rather than Greene's inexpressive lines, Gloucester's to the Keeper of his disgraced Duchess:

> *Entreat her not the worse, in that I pray*
> *You vse her well: the World may laugh againe,*
> *And I may liue to doe you kindnesse, if*
> *You doe it her. . . .*

or a weaver's honest testimony to something not relevant, "Sir, he made a Chimney in my Fathers house, and the brickes are aliue at this day to testifie it: therefore deny it not"? It was on the big "parts", especially York's, and the rant, and the comic scenes, that Shakespeare did most work—if that can be called work which seems done so easily—but before he finished he had rehandled or written fresh half the play. Maybe he really just began casually doing it, dissatisfied, like his fellow-actors, with the script they had bought; discovering in himself, as he went, feelings that

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would not let him dismiss even two flagrant impostors without the woman's parting "Alas Sir, we did it for pure need" (which will not soften their sentence), and powers—a diction, say, such that even in this early work he probably uses more words than all his early dramatic rivals taken together—not to speak of an intellect, an imagination, a structural sense, a wit, a sweetness and energy of versification, a syntax, gifts equally for plenitude and concision, all incomparable with theirs. He did much the same to *3 Henry VI,* but with a dwindling interest perhaps (the first play is better) until the figure of Richard rekindled it and drew him then on his own into the masterwork of the opening period. Our taste is uneasy, I think, with the malignant and beguiling Richard; the most sufficient account of the daring manifested in his creation is that of an 18th century Scot, William Richardson. But this daring throws a broad light forward to Shakespeare's achievements—the greater the difficulties, the more active he is—and he was master here already of the unique stroking of presentment that drove Coleridge to one of his deepest conceptions, that of an "ensouling of experience by meditation":

> Richard *loues* Richard, *that is, I am I.*

Richard's opening soliloquy, which seems crudely explicit (ugly and therefore unfit for love, I'll be a villain) and yet is so far from being repellent that it fascinates, instead merely hints at what really matters to Richard: his feeling that since wrong has been done him by Nature, he is justified in doing wrong—a sentiment which escapes our critical coolness precisely because it is not expressed—unwittingly our similar feeling about ourselves unites with Richard's, and we sympathize and admire. Shakespeare, as Freud put it in an analysis of the speech, "obliges us to supplement, he engages our intellectual activity, diverts it from critical reflections, and keeps us closely identified with his hero."

This work was written, presumably, hard on *Henry VI,* and perhaps in 1592, before playing went under restraint for plague on June 23rd. Then the English drama reached full psychological stature in Shakespeare before Marlowe, whose *Doctor Faustus* followed *Richard III.* Shakespeare's predecessors in comedy determined the character of his work even less: Lyly as a remote model in elegant prose comedy, Henry Porter with some form of *The Two Angry Women of Abington* about 1589, Peele possibly,

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others no doubt unknown. *The Comedy of Errors* is a classical farce based on Plautus' *Menaechmi* with touches in situation from the *Amphitruo;* but it is more complicated and elegant than Plautus and it adds an enveloping action that is romantic. *Love's Labour's Lost* is a classical comedy, likewise observant of the unities of time and place; no source is known for the plot, such as it is. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is related rather to the romantic action of the *Errors* and its sources were romantic: a Spanish romance probably through the medium of a lost Queen's men's play "Felix and Philiomena" of 1585, perhaps a French tale translated by Henry Wotton in 1578, Adlington's *The Golden Asse of Apuleius* (1566), Arthur Brooke's poem *Romeus and Juliet* (1562), etc. This is Shakespeare's emptiest work—his only comedy, for instance, I've not seen performed—and ought for this reason, as well as for its interest in the conflict between love and friendship, a chief theme of the Sonnets, to precede *Henry VI* and *Richard III,* though it may not have. Whether he began on the classical or romantic side, farcical or comedic, we can hardly yet say. But he developed towards the use of rhyme in comedy; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will have as much rhymed as blank verse; and it may be instructive that in *The Two Gentlemen* this proportion is less than one-tenth, in the *Errors* one-third. The *Errors,* at least, cannot be later than 1594 because it was produced in notorious confusion at Gray's Inn at the end of the year. *Love's Labour's Lost* is peculiar in everything, partly because a great part of the end of the only version we have was rewritten by the poet about 1598. But the diverse strands of mockery blended in this first triumph of Shakespearian comedy were put at the service of an artistic method he never used again, to the end of polemic.

A cluster of allusions and likelihood seem to locate *Love's Labour's Lost* (the revision apart) late in 1593, perhaps December,[5] and its special air marks it as designed for private performance. Some ten thousand persons died in London again this year of plague (as if half a million New Yorkers were swept away); playing was restrained. Midway between his long poems, Shakespeare was full in the favour of Southampton; the play must have

[5]Among them allusions to Henri IV's conversion in July (iv.1.21-33), to Gabriel Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation* of this year (iv.2.89), to Chapman's poem *The Shadow of Night* evidently seen in manuscript (Field printed it) for it was registered on December 31st (iv.3.346-7, 255), besides plague allusions and "*Lord haue mercie on vs*" (v.2.419).

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been done for him, perhaps at Titchfield.[6] We are within a few months of the point where we began in April of 1594. Now I must invite your attention to some matters that interested the poet. We have seen how he followed French affairs. Despite Navarre's conversion, war dragged on in France between his forces under the young Duc de Biron, Longueville and others, and the League's under de Mayenne; English troops were now engaged, and I suppose curiosity was active about the French lasciviousness—the King's notoriously, and Longueville had been one of his rivals for Gabrielle the year before, de Mayenne had been prostrate with debauchery at Rouen. The young Earl of Essex stood very high at court, Southampton his intimate in one of the deepest friendships of the age. Essex's rival Sir Walter Ralegh, still in disgrace for the affair with a maid of honour in 1592 that had sent him to the Tower, had retired sulking to Sherborne and was occupied with study and speculation, surrounded by a small group of learned and literary men of whom the mathematician-astronomer Thomas Hariot was chief. The action of *Love's Labour's Lost* also takes place in retirement. The King of Navarre and three young lords, Berowne, Longaville, Dumaine, withdraw from the world to study for three years, vowing to see no women, fast, watch. Their austerity is to be relieved only by a fantastic strutting Spaniard named Armado, and incidentally a schoolmaster Holofernes, the clown Costard. But the Princess of France with three ladies comes visiting on a political embassy. In secret all four men love, breaking their vows; they discover each other and join forces; after a Farce of the Nine Worthies, Armado, who began the play by accusing Costard of breaking the retreat's laws with a country wench, is found to have got her with child himself; the ladies impose a year's penance upon the lords for vow-breaking and part, agreeing to accept them then.

The initial situation is very much that of a musical comedy in which Malenkov, Beria and Tito agree to give up public life and retire together in silence to study theology.[7] But this

[6]A garden-performance of the comedy a few miles away at Ashford Chace in 1937, by a group from Cambridge, confirmed my impression of its private character, and fadeless radiance.

[7]Cf. G. B. Harrison, *An Elizabethan Journal,* 1929, 422. The chief modern discussions of the play's topicality are the Introduction to the edition (1923) by Quiller-Couch and Dover Wilson, Frances A. Yates' *A Study of "Love's Labour's Lost"* (1936), M. C. Bradbrook's *The School of Night* (1936), Eleanor Grace Clark's *Ralegh and Marlowe* (1941). A reaction is under way against their exaggerated claims.

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satire is not developed, and I think that recent investigation, however disputable its details, has made good its claim that the general object of the play's satire is Ralegh and his group. Armado must in some degree be a caricature of Ralegh himself. He is melancholy, a "tough signeor" (Ralegh was over forty to Essex's twenty-six), poor, an orator and writer. "His humour," says Holofernes, "is loftie, his discourse peremptorie: his tongue fyled, his eye ambitious, his gate maiesticall, and his generall behauiour vaine, rediculous, and thrasonical . . . too picked, to spruce, too affected, to odd as it were, too peregrinat as I may call it." This is probably a fair Essex-Southampton image of Ralegh. To make him a Spaniard is merely the last straw. Armado cannot multiply one by three—"I am ill at reckning," he explains, "it fitteth the spirit of a Tapster." The mathematical and astronomical satire is intermittent. There may be hits at Hariot in Holofernes, and odd hits elsewhere as at Nashe in Armado's page Moth, perhaps also in Holofernes at Gabriel Harvey of Cambridge and John Florio (later, at least, Southampton's tutor in Italian but incompatible with him politically).

Our knowledge of the make-up and interests of Ralegh's group is imperfect. Shakespeare seems however to have taken Chapman's poem *The Shadow of Night* as a statement of its doctrine, and this is his real butt. Chapman called for solitude, contemplation, the Furor Poeticus—

No pen can any thing eternall wright,
That is not steept in humor of the Night.

Berowne, throughout a critic of the others' proceedings, is Shakespeare's hero, and he replies directly in the opening scene:

So ere you finde where light in darknes lyes,
Your light growes darke by loosing of your eyes.

Of course Berowne is a fearful euphuist too; he only surpasses the others in self-knowledge and eloquence; and when he is converted to plain speaking, when he rationalizes all their vow-breaking with an appeal against affectation and for *experience,* his author is as usual in this play both serious and not serious. Shakespeare's position, as against Chapman's, is a genuine one, but his heart is not in polemic. He might have used Berowne's words, to Chapman:

I haue for barbarisme spoke more
Then for that Angell knowledge you can say. . . .

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Shakespeare's playful, imperturbable superiority must sometimes have galled more dogmatic intellectuals. He was interested in creating an exquisite love-comedy.

His wit rather than his heart is everywhere, I think, in *Love's Labour's Lost* except in the revised portions. The first dramatic labour ever fully to engage Shakespeare's *heart* was his next. Here I suppose most readers would identify the author with his hero, if anyone, and Mercutio. But among the most personal lines in the play seem to be some unnecessary lines of old Capulet, who has indeed already just welcomed his guests and will shortly welcome them again.

> *Welcome gentlemen, I haue seene the day*
> *That I haue worne a visor and could tell*
> *A whispering tale in a faire Ladies eare:*
> *Such as would please: tis gone, tis gone, tis gone.*

A moment later among meaningless chat we hear, for no reason, of somebody unidentified and indifferent:

> *His sonne is thirtie.*

Shortly after his thirtieth birthday in 1594 a company was formed under the protection of the Lord Chamberlain, in which he bought a share; probably by a gift from Southampton, which may have been of £100. In October, Hunsdon was instructing the Lord Mayor to let "my nowe companie" play again at the Cross Keys in Gracechurch Street, and William Shakespeare was one of three payees, with Richard Burbage and Will Kemp, for December performances at Court. Perhaps the ambitious *Romeo and Juliet* was his first play for the Chamberlain's men—as his one other tragedy before *Hamlet* will be written five years hence for the opening of the Globe. Shakespeare's field has strangely cleared: Lyly had long ceased to write for the stage, Peele was ill and to die, Greene and Marlowe and Kyd were dead. And so, on to his wilderness of dramatic literature, or garden, or palace, to be created in the six years coming—*Richard II, 1* and *2 Henry IV, Henry V, King John,* comedies of the *Dream,* the *Merchant,* the *Shrew, Merry Wives, Much Ado, As You Like It, Twelfth Night,* and *Caesar*; and beyond.

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HERBERT READ

The Stag

Seven are the forests where he ranges
Browsing the scant oriels of herbage.
If he has a haste he has no fear—
There is no panther to ravage
The mystical solitude of the oaks.

Maugre the antlers that impede his flight
He advances with indiffident step;
Hoary perspectives
Meet and dissolve in his punctual eye.

He will rest where the waters break
Into a white and moist cascade:
Frail are the blossoms there
In his perpetual shade.

Inscription

For an Autobiography

Take this book that's but a fable
Told into the icy night:
Think kindly of a man not able
To face the fiery light.
He had wandered over mountains
And bruised his feet on stones,
Had dreamt of wine-fed fountains
That dull the ache of bones.
Now he is past and gone, Madam,
His fame has gone before:
It is a ghost of Adam
That knocks upon your door.

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A Gift For Scardanelli[1]

See, the field is empty . . .
You came here by a curious detour:
the hedges were trimmed but o-
ranges among the intricate thorns
glowed like torches. You expected to find
a temple of honey-coloured stone
and an old man crouched in the porch
listening to a marble-browed girl
who there discourses on the nature of love.

April und Mai and Junius sind ferne,
Ich bin nichts mehr, ich lebe nicht mehr gerne.

The clouds are unanchored: they might
fall out of the sky
to cover you.
I have brought you a basket of figs
and some fine linen
but, alas,
no white goat to slaughter
and fingers have faltered
that should have played the flute.

[1]Scardanelli: the name with which Hölderlin signed his last poems.

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RICHARD EBERHART

To Evan

I wanted to give him some gift,
The breath of my breath, the look of my eyes,
I wanted to give him some gift,
Lying there so piteously.

I wanted to give him some gift,
Small child dying slowly,
With brave blue intelligent eyes,
His form withered piteously.

Only in the intelligence of those eyes
Where life had retreated for a piercing look
Was the enormous mystery justified,
As he inhaled the betraying oxygen.

I wanted to give him some gift,
A look from my look not to frighten him,
A breath from my haleness, my even vigor,
The same breath as his lonely breath.

Tenacious life in this little form
That will soon vanish from it entirely,
Unforgettable features of this little boy,
Do you mock my passion in your long passing?

I wanted to give him some gift,
Breath of my breath, the look of my eyes,
This is all upon earth, under heaven,
I can give him, a child dying, and I unwise.

Though I would menace the tall skies
And cry out as man has from the beginning
At the unequal fate held over us from our birth
I could not for a moment suspend this child's dying.

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O though I would look into his intelligent eyes
With the world's weight of experience and despair
I could not mate the black look before death,
Nor seize the secret from the secrecy.

I wanted to give him some gift,
Breath of my breath, the look of my eyes.
Farewell, fair spirit. Fare forward, voyager.
I pass away silently and see him no more.

The Human Being is a Lonely Creature

It is borne in upon me that pain
Is essential. The bones refuse to act.
Recalcitrancy is life's fine flower.
The human being is a lonely creature.

Fear is of the essence. You do not fear?
I say you lie. Fear is the truth of time.
If it is not now, it will come hereafter.
Death is waiting for the human creature.

Praise to harmony and love.
They are best, all else is false.
Yet even in love and harmony
The human being is a lonely creature.

The old sloughed off, the new new-born,
What fate and what high hazards join
As life tries out the soul's enterprise.
Time is waiting for the human creature.

Life is daring all our human stature.
Death looks, and waits for each bright eye.
Love and harmony are our best nurture.
The human being is a lonely creature.

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The Dry Rot

The fine powder of the dry rot,
A new texture in the heart of the wood,
Crooked my finger as I scooped it out,
The rare old stuff of mankind's dream.

What to do with it? Pure contemplation?
Savage remorse? Illimitable irony?
A cosmetic for the face of Cleopatra?
Time in the blood is this pale substance too.

I mixed it with my sweat, and painted on
My legs and biceps bands of gold.
Sallying forth in the guise of Antony
I sought the dusky land of sandy Egypt.

With a savage queen I lost remorse;
I threw my manhood down along a gold divan.
With a gesture of defiance and of loss
I met the meaning of the dry rot in that land.

Dig me up, then, in some later century,
Threading the pale sand through your thin fingers.
As you unclothe my bones in scholarship's delight,
Think of dialectic, imagination, the Rose of Venus.

La Crosse at Ninety Miles An Hour

Better to be the rock above the river,
The bluff, brown and age-old sandstone,
Than the broad river winding to the Gulf.

The river looks like world reality
And has the serenity of wide and open things.
It is a river of even ice today.

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Winter men in square cold huts have cut
Round holes to fish through: I saw it as a boy.
They have a will to tamper with the river.

Up on the high bluffs nothing but spirit!
It is there I would be, where an Indian scout was
Long ago, now purely imaginary.

It is a useless and heaven-depended place,
Commodious rock to lock the spirit in,
Where it gazes on the river and the land.

Better to be rock-like than river-like;
Water is a symbol will wear us all away.
Rock comes to the same end, more slowly so.

Rock is the wish of the spirit, heavy symbol,
Something to hold to beyond worldly use.
I feel it in my bones, kinship with vision,

And on the brown bluffs above the Mississippi
In the land of my deepest, earliest memories,
Rushing along at ninety miles an hour,

I feel the old elation of the imagination.
Strong talk of the river and the rock.
Small division between the world and spirit.

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RICHARD CLAY

Rain on Prize Day

In April, when the sea is changing color off the coast of New England, Mark Dorr left his teaching duties at the school every afternoon and ran down the hill to the beach, scanning the four horizons for signs of rain or unwelcome friends. He found a sheltered hollow behind the dunes where he could spread his towel and remove the clothes from his slender body, exposing his skin to every feeble glimmer of warmth from the sun. When he had settled his hips, wriggling to make a hollow in the sand, he lay back and closed his eyes in peace. This quiet ritual persisted every day, in spite of the sea wind that chilled his shivering skin and the clouds that raced before the sun.

Each afternoon the sky was more blue and his skin more brown. The clouds were fewer and less ominous, and the sun burned deeper into his bones. He lay on his back hour after hour, suspended, dark and inert like a chrysalis, not sleeping, not even relaxed, but tense as a sentry awaiting a signal. Then one day the first soft breeze from the land began its morning journey out to sea and returned in the afternoon still warm and balmy. Mark rose from the towel on which he lay and sniffed the air as he pulled on his faded blue trunks. He climbed joyfully to the top of the highest dune, feeling his toes sink in the soft sand. The sea lay beneath him as sunny and calm as a summer day. The long rollers and heavy surf of winter had turned to little waves that curled and cast themselves on the sand with a fringe of foam as white and delicate as lace.

Mark jerked his head both ways, scanning the full length of the deserted beach before he plunged down the slope of the dune, digging huge imprints into the soft sand. As he raced across the level beach he surprised a gathering of sandpipers who scattered nimbly out of his path as he dove into the docile waves. He stumbled at once to his feet, waist deep in green water, shaking the drops out of his eyes. The shock of the terrible cold made him gasp and spring in the air and turn back, as if the water had

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rejected him with a viciousness that made him recoil in horror. But in the very act of turning he twisted his body from behind and plunged in again, whipping the water to a sparkling wake as he swam out beyond the waves to the smooth place where the sun gleamed on the sea like a vision of warmth and ease.

He floated there on his back with his black eyes staring at the sun and his limbs undulating like seaweed on every ripple and swell of the dark water. Gradually the arctic cold seeped into his flesh, creeping through his bone and tissue, chilling the warm pumping of his blood, squeezing with huge pressure until only a kernel of himself was left in the center, resistant, warm and alive. At the moment when this nugget seemed unable to endure he flopped over and dove like a porpoise and came up flailing the water and shouting a wild cry that trailed off in a gurgle as he sank and then burst forth undiminished as he rose again, beating the water to a froth, and screaming.

He came out of the waves, splashing the white foam, his skin stung red and raw as if a layer of it had been stripped off in the combat. When his feet touched the pavement of sand he began to run, pumping his knees high and hard for a mile up the beach, his skin stretched taut as rubber over the sharp bones of his handsome face. When he reached the shelter of the big white log he collapsed by its side, face down on the sand, and fell instantly and happily asleep.

The log by which he lay was the gift of some legendary storm of another generation. Those forgotten waves had swept its massive trunk high up on the sand and left it stranded there with long twisted roots stretched towards the dunes like fingers never closing. No storm or tide since that original day disturbed the log where it lay, buried now half in the drifting sand like a temple column fallen in the desert. The part that remained exposed was of such enduring size that it covered Mark with a blanket of shadow as the sun slid down in the west and the white gulls mewed and circled in the sky above.

II

The next day was a blessing of light and sunshine falling alike on the beach, the hill, and the clustered buildings of St. Christo-

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pher's School. The dormitories were perched high upon the hill like a phalanx around the graceful chapel tower. The sunshine touched their battlements of brick and limestone with a gentle glow that softened the hard materials to the texture of rosewood and alabaster and reflected from the mullioned windows of the dining hall in a thousand golden splinters of light.

The headmaster, Mr. Sebastian Swazey, stood with arms folded in his familiar position on the terrace above the sea, feet planted by the boxwood hedge, his magnificent eyes watching the lunch-time throng pouring out through the gothic doors. He beamed on their busy faces as they made plans for an afternoon of tennis or baseball or going out in boats. After a moment he turned his head towards his best friend, the senior master of history, who was speaking in his ear.

"No, Matthew," he said in a grave voice, running a finger inside his collar and jutting his chin. "Mr. Dorr couldn't wait for you. He made the same request several weeks ago, and I was forced to turn him down. I see no reason now to change my position. His ideas have a certain merit, but teaching is not a thing of fashion to be altered with the season."

"Quite so, Sebastian, but we mustn't fall behind, must we?"

"I am not aware of falling behind. When I laid out that course it was as modern as anything could be. It's still a challenge to any instructor. I ask you. Are ten years going to change a course covering thirty centuries? No, they are not, and you know it, Matthew."

"Not in the events given, I agree, but in the new interpretations, in the new information and discoveries, and in so many ways, Sebastian. And Mark has a fresh approach. We need what he can give us."

The headmaster nodded his monumental head. "All in due time," he said. "We are not reformers pushing the minute. We are conservers, Matthew, conservers of a great tradition. For us the basic values do not change, and what is done best is done slowly. There will be time enough. Let us wait until we can see the real trend of events before we rush to make new interpretations."

"But Sebastian, it's possible that Mark may already see the trend of events. His youth may give him an insight we no longer—"

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"Nonsense. His youth gives him nothing but impatience. This is only his second year. He needs seasoning. What has he learned but facts? Has he learned understanding, humility, sympathy, or self control?" The headmaster paused then, perhaps fearing he had been too strong in his irritation. He smiled sweetly on his friend. "I hope you understand, Matthew. If I gave him his head now he would assume he possesses all he still lacks. I would do him permanent damage." He rubbed his chin and brushed some crumbs from his vest. "No," he said, "I believe we should leave things as they are. Next year perhaps we can open the subject again with a calmer perspective on all sides. Don't you agree, Matthew?" As his friend was on the point of speaking Mr. Swazey said jovially, "And now it's time for coffee. Come along, Matthew."

As they strolled across the crowded terrace towards the faculty lounge he squeezed his friend's arm. "Look," he said, "there he is now by the hedge. He has his whole band of followers dangling after him. Fitzhugh, Colbert, Marley, and Dixon. He doesn't seem a day older than any of them."

III

Mark was indeed bouncing and cavorting with all the spirits of youth. "Why, Aldie," he cried. "I'm surprised at you. You've never shown this interest in women before." Alder Dixon's skin turned red at the back of his neck. Mark smiled at the circle of boys, widening his eyes and holding out his hands in a gesture of appeal. "I ask you all to consider that Aldie has now come to manhood," he announced. His voice was declamatory, and his hands and shoulders swayed and moved like the leader of a chorus. "The golden summers of childhood have fallen from him like tarnished beads. The veil is torn from his eyes. The full knowledge of the evil of the world strikes him upon the brow." Mark struck his own brow, distorting his countenance like a rubber face squeezed into the most awesome grimaces and popeyed contortions. "Is there one among you who can look into his own heart and not find it bleeding for this younger brother! Is there one among you who will not steel himself to the grim task before us! Ah!" He waggled a finger at each of them in turn as they watched him intently, their eyes fastened on every gesture, their

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ears insulated from the surrounding hubbub on the terrace so that they heard only what he said and brimmed with mirth waiting for the next words. "I say to you that it is a most solemn duty that we face. We must stand as sponsors for Aldie before the grim mysteries and oracles of life and divulge to him the terrible meaning of Eve and the Forbidden Fruit." He spoke these last words with such a dolorous air that the boys broke into peals of hysterical laughter as if sex were their family joke. Mark doubled over and slapped his knee soundlessly in mockery of extravagant and hopeless laughter. He bobbed and bowed, and the others imitated his mockery at once, the whole group bobbing and bowing and slapping their knees silently like a ballet troupe, except Alder Dixon, who said, "You can go to hell," and strode away.

Mark ran on his toes, running after him. He touched his arm and caught both wrists, looking into his soft brown eyes. "Don't be a fool," he said intently.

"I don't like you laughing at me." Alder Dixon pulled his wrists free. "Just because that sexy bid says hello to me at the table."

"Don't be a fool, Aldie. I did it on purpose so I could talk to you alone. Listen," he said, taking the boy's wrists again and squeezing them, "do you want to know where I've been the last two weeks? I haven't told the others. Look." With his back turned to the terrace he undid three buttons of his shirt and pulled it open enough to show the curly black hairs of his chest and a patch of brown skin.

"God, that's wonderful, Mark. Can I go with you today?"

"But I'm inviting you, Aldie. I'll be at the log at two o'clock. Don't let anyone know; we don't want a crowd. Now listen," he looked in the boy's eyes, "this is important. Remember when you told me you saw Harold's ledger? You said it had all his investments—thousands and thousands of dollars—and those charts. Has he still got it, do you know?"

Aldie shrugged his thin shoulders. "I don't know. It was just a goddamned accident I saw it before. He'd murder me if he ever knew. Christ, you don't know that guy and his locks."

Mark laughed.

"I mean it," Aldie continued in his high-pitched voice. "He locks up every goddamned thing. It isn't just letters and stupid

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books like Milton. He even locks up candy bars. Little nickel candy bars. What the hell."

"What the hell," Mark said, coughing.

"I mean it. Christ, you don't know that guy, Mark. He's really half baked, believe me. Even with all that dough."

Mark stopped laughing with a long sigh. "So you haven't seen it?"

"No."

"And you don't know whether he still has it, do you?"

"No. But I'm sure he has. Listen, Mark, what's this all about? If you think you're going to get anything out of that stingy—"

Mark squeezed Aldie's wrists. "Two o'clock?" he asked.

Aldie grinned. "Two o'clock," he answered.

Mark darted away, skipping nimbly through the crowd as if he was executing a sprightly little dance as he avoided those who might stop him. Mrs. Swazey caught him for a moment as he tried to slip by, and he bowed to her with a deep courtliness that seemed ironic in someone so young. With a fixed smile on his face he escaped into the building, dashing across the creaky hardwood floor of the library and up the hall stairs two at a time until he reached the fourth form hall.

He began to whistle a gay tune as he walked to the turning of the hall and entered his room. He locked the door behind him and went to the window. He put his hands on the window sill as he leaned out. The sill was warm from the sun, and the sun felt warm on his hands. The new buds were on the gray twigs. The muddy grass was tinged with fresh green.

He heard voices coming from the quadrangle and drew back in the room. He licked his dry lips and lay down on his stomach on the Mexican rug. The squares of sunlight crept across the floor towards him. The rug felt coarse and hairy and smelled of dust. He heard the hollow crack of a bat—"tlock"—and the mingled cries of shouting from the baseball field. Then all was quiet. After a while a door slammed and feet thumped on the stairs. He glanced at the clock and leaped up, standing out of sight by the window's edge. He watched Aldie run out of the building and across the lawn. When he had climbed the wall and disappeared below the curve of the meadow that led to the beach Mark turned back and unlocked his door. He stepped into the dark hall and

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listened. All the doors were closed and all the rooms were silent. The only sound was his own breathing and the deep pumping of his heart. He walked quickly to the far end of the hall and opened one of the doors there without a sound.

IV

Harold Stroud's broad shoulders were bent over the desk by the window. Mark let the door click behind him and took a breath. "Hello," he said. He had been in the room many times before without noticing how like a cell it seemed with the hard oak chairs and bureaus and the twin metal beds painted dark green. The only spots of color in the room were a few Flemish prints on the walls.

"Just a minute," Harold answered in a muffled voice without turning his head. He closed the ledger on the desk in front of him. The attitude of his body was oddly protective and tense as he slid it into the middle drawer of the desk, carefully locking the drawer with a key drawn on a chain from his pocket. He twisted his big frame around in the chair and looked at Mark as if there had been no delay.

"Why, hello, Mr. Dorr," he said. "You surprised me. Aldie's gone out someplace. I don't know where."

"I don't want Aldie." Mark skirted around one of the metal beds and stood before the boy, his hands on his hips. He flicked out his tongue and licked his dry lips. "That was your ledger, wasn't it?"

Harold blinked. He had the figure of a grown man, but there was a disjointed softness about his body and an unformed roundness of his face that betrayed his youth. "What do you mean, sir?"

"That book you put in the drawer when I came in."

"What book?"

"In the drawer."

"The drawer's locked, sir." He jerked the drawer so hard that the whole desk moved. "See," he said, and his face assumed a vacant stubborn expression.

Mark sat down on Aldie's chair. The chair was hard and uncomfortable. He crossed his knees, swinging one leg rhythmically. "Harold, I want you to know I've come to ask your help."

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"Yes, sir?"

"Don't call me sir. This isn't room inspection."

"Yes, Mr. Dorr."

"I want you to be my manager, Harold. Fitz and Aldie and those fellows are all right, but they don't know anything about money."

"Oh, it isn't so hard."

"Don't be modest. It's too hard for them, and it's too hard for me. Now listen. I have a thousand dollars, Harold. Savings and things. And I have a plan that's the most important thing in the world, but I need money. I need more money. I need it quickly. I need my money to make me some money. I want you to take charge and tell me how to do it."

Harold smiled. "It's not so easy—"

"That's why I'm counting on you. That why I've come to you to be my manager. You have the experience. You've been working all winter on your ledger, and you ought to—"

"For crying out loud! I suppose that crazy Aldie's been telling some big stupid story—"

"Now, now, keep your temper, Harold. He hasn't said a thing. Do you think I've been dormitory master all year without knowing what's going on under my own nose?"

"How do you know unless Aldie's told you?"

"How do I know what? That you keep candy in here against the rules? That you read under the covers after lights? That you sneak into town without permission? That you have a radio hidden somewhere and cigarettes? Or that you break every damned rule we have here whenever you feel like it and sometimes when you don't feel like it, just for the hell of it? How do I know what?"

Harold turned his big head. His grave blue eyes regarded Mark for a moment. "I guess you think I'm a sap, don't you?"

"Outside of being on the honor roll, I guess you are."

"But nobody's told me what to do. I live with my grandfather, you know. I mean, my mother and father are dead, or sort of disappeared, at least my father is, and I haven't had—"

"I know." The hard edge of the oak chair dug into Mark's thighs. He crossed his knees and began bobbing his other foot.

"Well, I don't know what to do about people. I don't know

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how to treat them. Take someone like Aldie. My grandfather gave me some essays on friendship to read. People are supposed to be friends when they have the same interests and that sort of thing. But Aldie's just as different from me as night from day. What am I supposed to do? I didn't ask for him for a roommate."

"It cuts both ways, Harold."

"How do you mean?"

"He didn't ask for you."

The boy frowned. "That's a thought," he said. "You know, I like talking to you, Mr. Dorr." He looked down at his hands, not knowing where to put them. "I don't want you to think that all I do is sit up here like some stupid hermit. I've been working very hard on that ledger. I guess you'll think it's silly, but I'd like to show it to you."

"Hold on, Harold. I don't want to dig into secrets. I'm only asking for advice. Keep your secrets."

"I'm tired of keeping it. It's so stupid. I want to show you."

Mark crossed his other knee. "Is that your own decision, Harold?"

"Yes, Mark. I mean, yes, Mr. Dorr."

Mark smiled. "Whatever you say, Harold."

The boy unlocked the desk drawer and lifted the big book onto the blotter. It was bound in boards covered with green canvas and held together at one end by a metal hinge that clanked as it was put on the desk. Mark ran his finger along the embossed gold on the red leather corners. "It's beautiful," he said. He pulled up Aldie's chair until they were seated shoulder to shoulder. Harold swung the heavy cover open and dropped it with a thud like the lid of a box.

"All this part belongs to my grandfather," he said. He picked up the thick wad of pages and riffled the edges, letting some fall as he held the others with his thumb. The pages were covered with fine handwriting in faded ink giving accounts of property neatly arranged and sprinkled with dollar signs, percentages, fractions, decimals, dividends, roots and powers, and all the many symbols of money. "This part is mine," Harold said, dropping the rest into place and smoothing out the first sheet. The white page with the fine blue lines was covered with figures and a writing that was remarkably similar to the older hand. "These are

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the names of the companies, and the number of shares, and what they cost, and how much profit or loss I made. It's really very simple."

Mark leaned forward in his chair and placed his finger on the page. "Are these the companies?" he asked. "It's quite a list. Atlantic Coast Line, Gold Dust, Mohawk Mills, Savage Arms, Hercules Powder, Grand Union—what do these names *mean,* Harold?—I can't read them all. What's Gold Dust for example? Is that a gold mine?"

"A gold mine!" Harold laughed. "Are you joking, Mark? For crying out loud, don't you know the Gold Dust Twins? It's a soap company."

"Oh, no. I didn't think. Of course I know. Well, what have you done with it? This is the number of shares, isn't it? And the date you bought it? And the date you sold? And what's this? What's happened? What does this arrow mean?"

"That shows it's a profit."

"Well, good. So you made a profit? Is this how much you made?"

"Yes."

"Seven thousand dollars!"

"Yes."

"On that one company! Harold, that's astounding." Mark blinked his eyes and stared at the ledger. "And these other companies? Let's see. Here's another arrow. Six thousand, eighteen thousand, four thousand—." He flipped over the page and found the second one crowded with figures and arrows, and the third page and the fourth and the fifth. He put his palms flat on the ledger and sat back. "This is the damnedest thing I've ever seen. My God, how do you do it? What's happened to the stock market? Has it recovered? Is it going up again?"

Harold smiled happily. "Oh, no. It's never been lower."

"Lower than the crash?"

"My gosh, Mark, the crash was nothing. Everybody knows that. Here, let me show you." He turned the pages until he found the one he wanted. As he smoothed it out Mark saw the jagged black line crossing the page from left to right like the crest of a mountain range. "Here's the peak," Harold pointed. "In October. And then Black Friday. See how it drops and then comes up a

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little the next year. Last year was much worse. And this year the bottom has really dropped out. Look at it. Way down here. Why, I'll tell you, even if it went half-way up again to where it was after the crash—even if it only did that they'd say it was a boom again."

Mark touched the soft cool surface of the paper with his finger tips.

"I can't believe it," he said. He looked at the name printed in the box in the corner of the page, "BENJ. F. STROUD", and at the chart again. "I know a man like your grandfather wouldn't put his name on it unless it was true, but it doesn't make sense to me. If everyone's losing their shirts," he waved his hand over the open ledger, "why aren't you? How do you make all this profit?"

"By selling short. It's the only way to make money today, Mark."

"Oh, yes." Mark nodded and smoothed his hand back over his curly black hair. "But isn't that supposed to be dishonest? Is it allowed any more?"

"Oh, my gosh, of course it's allowed. It's perfectly honest. Why shouldn't it be allowed?"

"Well, I don't know. I'm not familiar with how it's done."

"It's easy. There's nothing to it. If you think a stock is going down you tell your broker to sell it short. He knows you haven't got the stock, but he sells it anyway and gives you credit for the sale in your account. Then he keeps your account on the short side until you deliver the stock you've sold. If it goes down you buy it at the lower price and deliver it to him, and you make the difference."

"Isn't the broker taking an awful chance? Suppose you can't deliver?"

"Oh, Mark, you have to deliver. It may be a month or a year or ten years. But sometime you have to deliver. Of course he has to trust you, but he isn't taking the chance. You are. You're the one who's betting on what the stock will do. You're the one who wins if it goes down and loses if it goes up."

"But only when you deliver. Isn't that right, Harold? It doesn't matter what happens to the stock. You don't win or lose anything until you have to buy it so you can deliver. Is that it?"

"Yes."

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"Don't you think there's something bad about that, Harold? Don't you think it's like gambling?"

Harold didn't answer. Mark watched him fold his ledger and put it away. "Never mind," Mark cried, "it's too much for me to understand. Whatever you've done you've done superbly." He clapped his hands together. "And now I've changed my mind, Harold. I'm not going to ask you for advice. I'm going to turn my thousand dollars over to you. The whole thing. Lock, stock and barrel. You do whatever you want with it, as long as you make me some profit. I don't pretend to know about those things. Sometime you can explain it to me. But now I need your help. I don't care how you arrange it. I leave that up to you if you'll only help me. You will, won't you?"

Harold shook his head. "Oh, no, I can't."

"If you're afraid you'll lose it, I'll take the chance. It's my money."

"Please don't ask me, Mark."

"I need it, Harold."

"No. I'm sorry."

Mark lowered his black eyes and stared at the floor. Suddenly he jumped up. "You've never been out in my car, have you Harold?"

"No, Mark."

"Let's go for a ride this afternoon. I know a beach beyond Sakonnet no one else has found. Will you come?"

Harold glanced up with a quick smile. "Do you really want me?"

"But I'm inviting you, Harold. I'm counting on you. Let's go."

The young man rose from the desk. As they opened the door and went out together the sea breeze surged in the window, lifting the curtains so they fluttered violently for a moment and died down again after the door was closed.

V

By the twisted bounty of nature the New England spring came early that year, spilling buttercups in the ditches, staining the dune grass with the deepest green of the sea, and drawing the threat of the summer storms early into the month of May. Often

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in the evening when Mark and Harold hurried home from their solitary drives they saw the flicker of lightning on the horizon and heard the distant roll of thunder. But the days when they travelled were clear, and the afternoons were glorious on the lonesome beaches.

They spent time like money that will never run out. They looked for ponds with odd names and coves where they could stand on warm stones. They found windy places out of season, forgotten until summer, sand drifted over boardwalks, benches overturned, pink paint scaling off hot dog stands; Watch Hill and Weekapaug and Narragansett Pier; Mattapoisett, Acoaxet, Poponessett Beach.

The day when they arrived at Poponessett Beach and stood on top of the dunes the sun was shining on the long lines of plumed breakers that charged like cavalry as far as the eye could see. Mark shed his clothes as he ran down the slope and scampered into the water in his blue trunks. Harold hung back a moment as he untied the arms of his sweater from around his waist. He found a place to put his clothes, leaving his towel on top of his white pants and shirt, and he followed Mark out to the waist deep water. There they stood apart in the valleys between the combers, Harold's bare chest white and Mark's slender and brown. They threw a wet tennis ball to each other, reaching and missing and falling in the foam.

As they backed further apart Harold made an awkward throw. The ball dropped in the curve of a breaking wave and was carried bobbing towards the beach. Mark splashed after it and scooped it up just before it reached the sand. He shook a fist in the air and shouted words that were drowned in the noise of the surf as he lobbed the ball back in a high arc way over Harold's head. It fell far out in the water, and Harold followed it blindly, not seeing how deep the water was until a long swell lifted him clear of the bottom. When he lost his footing his face turned white, and he let himself sink in a panic. Mark plunged towards him and was only a few feet away when Harold came up again, shaking his head and shoulders, coughing water from his mouth, sweeping his wet hair out of his eyes. As he stumbled through the surf towards the water's edge Mark grabbed his arm at the elbow and walked by his side.

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"Damn it," he said, "you gave me a fright. You have no business going out so far."

"I know, Mark. I'm sorry."

"Even if I threw the ball too far by accident you shouldn't have chased after it."

"I know, Mark."

"It's shameful at your age not to be able to swim. There's no excuse for it." Mark shook his arm. "Now listen to me. I'm going to teach you. I don't care what you say."

"No, Mark, please."

Mark stuck out his lower lip and blew a shiny drop of water from the tip of his nose. "Come on. Let's get back in the water. We'll have the first lesson right now. When I'm through with you, damn it, you'll be able to swim like a fish. Come on."

"It's too cold today."

"Come on."

"It's too rough."

"Come on."

"No."

Mark grabbed Harold's arm and tugged at him, trying to pull him towards the water. As soon as he touched the boy he saw his face turn scarlet. Mark held tight, but Harold was too strong, and with a sudden powerful wrench of his whole body he tore himself free.

Mark watched him as he walked away, not looking back, and went to his little pile of clothes. He put on his shirt over his wet trunks. He dried his hands on his shirt-tails and then lay down on his back with his hands behind his head, his eyes wide open and staring up at the sky.

Mark inspected the soft skin of his wrist. There were two red scratches more than an inch long. He lifted his wrist to his mouth and licked the red places with his tongue, tasting the salt of the sea mixed with the salt of his blood. He leaned down and picked up a handful of wet sand, squeezing the gritty material for a moment as if he wished it were a finer, more tractable substance. Then he hurled it at the water and turned his back on the waves. He went over next to Harold and fell to his knees on the warm sand and fell to his hands, feeling the dry sand trickle through his fingers, and fell to his stomach on the warm soft sand. He

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placed his head upon his hands and looked away to the west where the dark clouds were gathering in the sky.

"Mark." The boy's voice was behind him. "I'm sorry, Mark. I'm sorry I spoiled your game."

Mark raised his head and turned it. "If you weren't so damned serious," he said. He reached out and took Harold by the hair and shook the boy's head slowly from side to side. "So damned stubborn."

"I'm not stubborn."

"Always brooding."

"I'm not."

"Always bristling."

"I'm—oh, all right. What's wrong with me, Mark?"

Mark twisted his body around and sat up. "You're carrying the whole burden of the world on your shoulders, Harold. You expect too much from everybody, and you give nothing in return. It's a two way affair, you know. We're all pretty much the same. We want to like ourselves. If you help me to like myself better I'll like you in return. But if you criticize me, act superior, and resist me at every turn it only stands to reason that I'll treat you the same way. It's only self protection. I'm no different than anybody else."

The boy was sitting with his legs crossed Indian style. "Do I really do that, Mark? I don't mean to be that way."

"You can't help it. You see everything in such a dramatic personal way. Like last night when you—what was the quotation?—illumine my darkness—something something?"

"No, no, Mark. 'What in me is dark, illumine; what is low, raise and support; that to the height of this great argument I may assert—'."

"All right. That's enough to get the point. Now, whose darkness is Milton talking about? Is it only his physical blindness? Or is it the black ignorance of the people of his times, the darkness in their lives? Does he want light only for himself, as you think, or for everyone? A man of such stature could say one thing and mean many others. It's obvious to me that his real meaning was the darkness of the oppression that strangled his people. It's clear that the light he wanted was the light of their freedom."

"For crying out loud, Mark. That isn't what he says at all. I

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don't see how anyone could get it wrong. He's only asking for help in writing his great poem."

"Ah, Harold, you're so true to form. The personal angle is all you can see. When you think of darkness you only think of your own darkness. But isn't it conceivable to you that John Milton saw and felt deeper than his own petty self? Can't you imagine the wonderful breadth of vision that would let him know the suffering of his people and would lead him to express it in a clever allegory to fool the corrupt church of his time?"

"No."

"Stubborn. You know I'm right."

"No, you aren't. You can't have Milton. He's mine. I won't have you interpreting a lot of slop about freedom and—"

"Harold! Don't be rude."

"I will. I will. You can't have him."

Mark laughed and squeezed the boy's knee. "You're wonderful," he said, "the very heart of drama. All right. You can have your Milton back. Take him and all his darkness. I don't want him. But remember, for every Milton there's a Rousseau. That's what makes us what we are. And who knows the truth? Who can really say? What is basic and what isn't? You can search in the past from now until you die, and I challenge you to say of any man—he is right and all others are wrong. Believe me, Harold, you must turn at last to your own experience. You're rich in it. You have it every day. To breathe, see, hear, taste, touch. In the end, how else can you learn? Through what other openings?" He squeezed the boy's knee again. "I used to worry about these things myelf, Harold, but if you know history you know how foolish it all is. My God, when I think of all the theories. Everyone tries to find something fundamental in history, but there's only one thing that's fundamental, and that's change. Change, change, change. From tyranny to freedom, from freedom to tyranny. From hope to despair and back to hope again. Age after age. Golden ages, dark ages, ages of commerce and culture and discovery. Ages of religion, ages of reason, ages of persecution and pillage and pomp. Always change. There are even times like the Victorian age when it looks as if nothing will ever change again. But change is stirring under the surface like the river under the ice. Sooner or later it breaks through with terrible

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force and pours out with a roar, and history moves on once more. The river's in full flood now, Harold. Make no mistake about that. It's carrying everything before it. The backwaters and islands will soon be flooded, too. And this time it isn't only happening in history, Harold. This time it's happening to us."

"My gosh, Mark."

Mark brushed the matted sand from the hair on his chest and slapped the sand from his body. "And here I am," he said, "doing nothing."

"That's not true, Mark."

"Teaching. Teaching boys in a school where the Victorian age is not yet over. My God, I have to get out of that backwater and into the stream of things. I have to get in the middle of the river and swim with the current. That's where I belong."

"And me, Mark?"

"You?"

"Where do I belong?"

"You, old hawkeye, sitting on the river bank watching everything go by. That's you, Harold."

"Oh, I'm not, Mark. I'm not. And even if I am, I won't be long. When I get old enough to—"

"It's not a matter of age. It's a matter of choice. You really have to be desperate. You have to be so frantic to make the plunge that you'll shed everything that was ever important to you and leave it behind. You haven't the temperament to do that, Harold."

"Oh, I have, Mark, I have. I only need a little help." The boy had formed a neat mound of sand over each foot and, as he wriggled his toes, the sand now crumbled around his feet. "I've been thinking," he said, "Gran told me I could ask a friend to stay for the summer in Southport. There's only Gran and me, and we have a beach of our own. It's a wonderful place. The water in the Sound is calm and warm at high tide. You could teach me to swim there. And I could show you the old quarry and my cave—"

Mark smiled. "Are you by any chance inviting me for the summer, Harold?"

"Oh, Mark, if you could."

In the very tone and tension Mark had a sudden glimpse of the

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empty spaces in the boy's life with the old man. He dug his fingers into the dry warm sand. It felt silky and soft. He picked up a handful and let it trickle through his fingers into the palm of his other hand and let it trickle back again until all the sand was spilled and gone.

"It's very tempting," he said. "Are you far from New York?"

"Only an hour on the train. Lots of people commute. It would be perfect for you, Mark. You could go down every morning and work all day with your friends on the political campaign and come home to us at night. And it would save you money if you stayed with us. You wouldn't need anything extra. Your thousand dollars would be more than enough."

"Yes," Mark said, frowning as he watched a sand flea jump over his foot. A shadow passed along the beach and left a chill as the clouds covered the sun. There was a sudden fresh smell in the air, and a sound of thunder. "So it would. So it would. What are you telling me? Are you saying you haven't done anything with my money? Is that it? Damn it, Harold, you said you would. You promised me. Are you trying to get out of it now? Are you trying to buy me off by inviting me to your place, by charity, by—"

"No, Mark, wait, wait." Harold fished a dirty envelope out of the back pocket of his white pants. "Here," he said.

"What's that?" Mark reached out his hand. He grabbed the envelope in haste and ripped it down the side so the green and gold paper bills fell out into the fresh wind from the sea. He lunged at the money, catching some and chasing the rest down the beach until he retrieved it all.

"My God," he cried, returning breathless. "There's five hundred dollars here. Five hundred, Harold. In only three weeks. I can't believe it. I don't know how you did it. But of course I do. I know. I know. You found one of those stocks in your ledger that was going down, and you're buying it short with my money and—"

"*Selling short,* Mark. You don't buy short, you sell short. And anyway—"

"All right. Selling short, buying short. I don't care what it is because you're doing it, not me. It's your brains and my money. What a perfect combination. My God," he said, shaking the sheaf

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of money in his fist, "it must be a miracle. I can't believe it's real."

Harold stood up and shook the sand off himself. "It's real enough," he said. A sheet of rain swept like a curtain across the point and started towards them across the choppy water. "There's the storm," he said. "I guess we better go."

"Anything you say, Harold. Your wish is my command. You can do no wrong." Mark placed his hand on Harold's arm. "Seriously," he said, "I'm very pleased. I couldn't be more pleased."

"I know."

"Ah, Harold, you'll never know." He sighed. "But it's not enough yet. Can you do it again?"

Harold shook his head.

"I know you can," Mark demanded.

"No, Mark, please."

"You must, Harold. Now you've started so brilliantly you must keep on. What you've done once comes easier the second time. And don't forget your promise. You promised to help me. You know this isn't enough. You know I depend on you entirely. Now, won't you try again."

"Is it more important than anything, Mark?"

"Yes, anything."

"All right." As the first big drops of rain spattered on the sand he hurried into his clothes and wrapped up the towel. With the balled towel tucked under one arm he began to run towards the car with his long lumbering clumsy stride.

When they both got in and slammed the doors Mark reached over and stuffed the paper money into the glove compartment and then set the windshield wiper working against the sheets of rain that swept over the car like a pebble in their path as they flung their whole force on the sands of Poponessett Beach. Mark began to sing. He was merry in the car, sound and dry inside, while the rainwater ran down the windows.

VI

During the third week in June and the last of the school year the heat of the sun reached a sustained intensity every broiling

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afternoon, and the evenings cooled slowly. Mark was in a frenzy as the end drew near. He sold his furniture in the town, packed his books and shipped them to his friend in New York, arranged at the post office to have his mail forwarded to Southport, and gave away the Rivera prints on his walls. Once, when he stooped down in the quadrangle to tie a shoe, he looked up from under his eyelids and saw the brick buildings around him like a wall, and he wanted to run. "Only four more days," he said to calm himself. "Only four more days." And then, on the day before Prize Day, as he stood outside the door of his last class a refrain like a stuck record played in his head; "Tomorrow at this time—tomorrow at this time—tomorrow at this—"

The day before Prize Day was the hottest of the season. Affections were quick and tempers short. Doors slammed, and feet thumped on the stairs. The telephone never stopped ringing in the office with the calls of parents making last minute plans. In the striped sunlight of his study Mr. Swazey made notes for his speech, running a finger inside his collar and jutting his chin. In the dark cool refuge of the limestone chapel the organist practiced the Dedication Hymn high on the balcony. And in the hallways of Senior House the sixth formers sauntered to and fro with the troubled look of half dressed Hamlets preparing to go on stage. For the eyes of these lordly figures were fixed on new horizons, and their hearts had already set forth on their difficult travels. And yet, as one passed another in the dark heat of the hallway he would stop and punch him softly and say, "Jesus, Jack, write me, will ya," and they would pause for a moment and turn away, as if unable to face the memory that an experience they had shared in common would be over tomorrow for good.

By evening there was a general letdown. Mark's car had been packed since before lunch. His room was stripped of all the furniture that had belonged to him. Even the curtains were taken down, so there was nothing to signal the arrival of the first cool breeze of evening as it came across the dark lawns and in through the window, lifting a white square of paper from the lighted circle of the desk and carrying it for a few feet in the darkened room before letting it float to the floor. Mark jumped up from his chair and retrieved it, placing it firmly on the blotter with the ink bottle to hold it.

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The attitude of his body was oddly protective and tense as he leaned over the desk. He held nearly three thousand dollars in his hands, twenties and fifties and hundreds, limp paper money that stuck to his fingers in the heat as he counted it under the white light of the hooded lamp. He checked the list on the paper. Each time he moved his arms the skin stuck to the desk. He counted the money slowly, snapping a rubber band around each packet. A thousand dollars were his savings; the rest Harold had made for him in the market. He paused and smiled. Two months ago so much money had seemed a fortune, unattainable.

The evening breeze grew stronger. The white paper anchored by the ink bottle fluttered as if alive. He put his hands on the money to keep it from blowing away. A door in the hall slammed, and he heard a window being shut. Someone ran across the gravel. A storm was coming. Mark stuffed the money into the manila envelope and slid it into the center drawer of the desk. He locked the drawer carefully and pulled it with a jerk to make sure it was caught.

From outside he heard a long soughing sound like the whole sky letting out its breath. As he got up to close the window the first rain drops splattered against the panes with the crisp hissing noise of fire. With the window closed the room was at once hot and damp and filled with the sound of running rain. He pressed his palms and forehead against the glass and peered through the window as if peering through the glass wall of an aquarium into a frightening world of black water, feeling in the pitiful trembling of the glass how thin was his protection. Blue flashes like flickering moonlight illuminated the scene of dark trees bent half to the ground and bushes weaving in the wind like sea bushes on the ocean bottom.

"I can't go with you tomorrow."

"What?" Mark looked over his shoulder. "My God, what are you supposed to be?"

Harold was standing inside the closed door. He was dressed in striped pyjamas and a heavy winter overcoat of Harris tweed. He was carrying his ledger under his arm. The sweat soaked his scalp and ran down his cheeks. His face was as white and heavy as dough, and his hair was stuck to his forehead like pointed leaves of ivy.

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He blinked and looked down at himself. "Oh, this," he said. He put the ledger on the desk and pulled off the coat, dropping it on the floor. His pyjamas stuck to his skin like wet paper. "I had a phone call. I couldn't go down to the office in my pyjamas, could I? I just grabbed anything. Listen, Mark, did you hear what I said? I can't drive to Southport with you tomorrow."

"Why not? Why not, damn it? Who phoned? Was it your grandfather?"

The boy wiped his face with his already wet sleeve, and his wandering eyes fluttered for a moment before they settled on Mark. "Yes. He's changed his mind. He's decided to come get me after all. He said he'd be up here before lunch."

"But why? After all our plans."

"I don't know. I don't know."

"What's wrong, Harold?"

"Oh, Mark, I'm in a terrible mess. Gran's wild. He's just plain wild."

"What's he wild about? Did he find out you stole his ledger?"

"Oh, no. It's much worse. He found out about the money. That's the worst thing. So I guess you'll have to give it back."

"Give what back?"

"The money I gave you."

"What money you gave me? The profit? The profit on those stocks? You're crazy. That's my money. You made that profit with my money. That's nothing to do with you or your grandfather."

"Yes, it has," Harold sighed. "That was my savings. I never said it was profit. That was all your own idea."

Mark sat down on the desk chair. The edge of the chair dug into his thighs. He crossed one leg over the other, bobbing his foot up and down. "Harold," he said, "I don't know what you're talking about. I don't know what the hell anybody's savings have to do with anything." He placed one hand upon the ledger. "With all the money you've got in here."

"I haven't any money in there."

"No? What happened to it?"

"I never had any. It was all a game I played."

Mark stared at the cover. "What do you mean? Did you invent all this? Isn't a penny of it real money?"

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"Not a penny. Open it up. Look at it. Look at the last page of mine. You'll find I have millions and millions of dollars. Do you think that's real? Do you think a boy like me would have—." He hesitated and smiled. "Why, if all that was real I'd have more money than Gran."

"Ah, Harold." Mark stood up and put his hand on the boy's arm. "You should have told me before."

"I didn't have the nerve. I was afraid you only liked me because I knew about money, and Aldie and those guys didn't."

"So you let me give you a thousand dollars?"

"Yes."

"Even though you did nothing with it?"

"Yes."

"And what I thought was a profit was part of your savings?"

"All my savings, all my Christmas presents, all my birthday presents. Everything, Mark."

"Did you know what you were doing?"

"I did."

Mark looked at the boy. With his wet striped pyjamas and his wet streaked hair he appeared a ludicrous figure, but a figure of a certain size and proportion that could not be denied.

"But why? My God, why?"

"To help you."

"But why? My God, was I worth it? What have I done for you? What have I done but tell you what's wrong with you? I've treated you like a dog."

"No, you haven't, Mark. You've treated me fine. You've treated me like Dad used to. He was always sort of impatient with me, but in a funny way so I knew he liked me just the same."

"Ah, Harold." Mark put a hand softly on the boy's head and twined his fingers slowly in the boy's hair and shook the boy's head gently back and forth. "You damned fool," he said caressingly, "you poor blessed goddamned fool. What a hell of a predicament you've gotten us into."

"But you'll give the money back, won't you, Mark? Then I could explain everything to Gran. I'm sure he'd forgive me."

Mark went to the window and threw it open. The rain drops fell on his hands and on his bare arms. The sound of the storm seemed very big in the little room. "Harold," Mark said, turning

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his back to the storm, "I suppose you don't realize how you've been meddling with other people's lives?"

"With my own, too, Mark."

"With your own, too. And with your grandfather's. And with mine, too, Harold. You can't give me money and let me believe it's my own and then calmly ask for it back. You can't let me resign my job and make all the plans I have and alter my whole life, my whole career, and then ask me to forget it all as if it was a game of make believe." He rapped his knuckles on the ledger lying on the desk. "A game like this," he said.

"Then you won't give it back."

"I didn't say I wouldn't. But do you know what you're asking me? Do you understand what you want me to do? You've given me a chance to make some sense out of my life, a reason to exist, a goal to fight for. You've given me far more than money, Harold. No one has ever given me as much as you have, no friend I've had, no one. You've given me hope. You've let me believe again in decency and fairness and everything that's important. And now the whistle blows, the game is over, and you want it back."

"Oh, no, Mark, no. It's not me. You know that. I gave it to you. You can keep it. But Gran—"

"Ah, Harold. There you have it. There's the heart of the matter. There's what's behind our whole predicament. I'm glad you found it yourself. It's your grandfather. If it wasn't for him there'd be no problem, would there?"

"No, Mark, but that's not the point. He's my grandfather, and he's all I have. I have to live with him. You don't."

"You have to live with yourself first, Harold. You're growing up now. You have to learn to make your own decisions. You have to learn to go to him and tell him that this is what you've decided, and he has to learn to respect it. He can't nurse you all your life, can he?"

"No."

"He can't be your guide forever, can he?"

"My guide? No, I suppose not. I guess I have to learn my own way."

"That's the spirit. Exactly. It's nobody's life but your own. When you learn your own way you'll also learn to be responsible

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for the results of your own decisions. Like that business you explained to me. Selling short. You have to take the consequences, good or bad, don't you?"

"Yes, I guess I do." Harold leaned down and picked up his heavy winter overcoat. He slid the ledger off the desk and cradled it on one arm. "The trouble is I never knew till now when I was making a decision and when I wasn't, so I didn't think of the consequences. I guess I made a decision that day when I showed you my ledger. I guess I wanted to impress you so you'd be my friend. Everything started there; everything good and everything bad."

"Bad? What's bad?"

"I don't know, Mark, but something's bad. I can't argue with you about it. You have a way of twisting things so I never can win an argument with you. But something bad has happened to both of us. You've sold me short, and I've sold Gran short, and nobody can trust anybody again."

"Don't overdo it, Harold."

"I can't overdo it. I can't. Oh, Mark, I'm so sorry for what I've done."

Mark walked jauntily over to the window and leaned on the wet sill to glance out at the storm. The wind was gone and the rain had settled into a steady downpour that could fall all night and all day Prize Day. "What are you talking about?" he asked as he turned around.

"Never mind. It doesn't matter now. The money's yours." The boy had his hand on the door, holding it half open. "Are you leaving tonight?"

"In this rain? Don't be silly."

"I thought you might." The boy looked up quickly. "Then you'll be here in the morning? Oh, Mark, will you explain to Gran? Please. Will you tell him what it's all about?"

"Ah, Harold—Harold—you've got to face him yourself some day."

The boy nodded his head. The door closed as he went out. The knob was released with a click. Mark heard the footsteps going away in the hall. A distant door was opened and closed again with a muffled sound. He held his breath and listened. The room was silent except for the splashing of the rain on the

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sill and the pumping of his heart. He unlocked the middle drawer of the desk and lifted out the envelope. It felt fat and solid in his hands as he dropped it in his open suitcase and snapped the catches shut.

In the hall he walked lightly on his toes and he was sure he made no noise, but as he passed Harold's door he heard the bed creak inside and knew at once that the boy had raised up on one elbow to listen. After a moment of standing still he heard the bed squeak again with a more general sound as if Harold was lying back now with his hands behind his head, staring at the ceiling.

When he reached the garage Mark swung his car out and headed down the hill. As he disappeared forever into the rainy night the buildings he had left behind stood wall to wall like a massive fort dotted with windows filled with light. As the hours turned towards midnight the lights went out one by one until all were gone. The great buildings sank in slumber, and the boys within their buttressed walls breathed softly in their splendid dreams, while darkness fell around them.

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WILLIAM MEREDITH

Miniature

One of the gentlest, as it looks from here,
Of Persian ways is how the shy are known
And looked on in the matter of their needs—
The shy, the disparate, the merely odd.
I have not been to Persia but they tell
How nothing is too much trouble all at once
For irritable beaters when a shy man hunts.
A forest bird was heard to trill for two,
Awkward in one another's presence still,
Two ornithologists, over and over until
They had noted down its call in turquoise curls
On the scrolls they paint with pictures of the fowl.

In the spiced equivalents of cafes there
Waiters grow civil to the ill-matched pair,
The bald and raven-haired, the strong and halt;
And indeed everyone is delicate
Of their delays, of just that complication
That makes at last their loves incapable.
While in the Persian darkness clop clop clop,
What is perhaps most courteous of all,
The bold and coarse ride off, time and again,
Bringing the nose a strong, ambiguous musk,
To do what must be done in violence.

The Open Sea

We say the sea is lonely; better say
Ourselves are lonesome creatures whom the sea
Gives neither yes nor no for company.

Oh, there are people, all right, settled in the sea,
It is as populous as Maine today,
But no one who will give you the time of day.

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A man who asks there of his family
Or a friend or teacher, gets a cold reply
Or finds him dead against that vast majority.

Nor does it signify that people who stay
Very long, bereaved or not, at the edge of the sea
Hear the drowned folk call: that is mere fancy,

They are speechless. And the famous noise of sea
Which a poet has beautifully told us in our day
Is hardly a sound to speak comfort to the lonely.

Although not yet a man given to prayer, I pray
For each creature lost, since the start, at sea,
And give thanks it was not I, nor yet one close to me.

PHILIP BOOTH

Fisherman

Under hawk-watch
over the river,
quick-schooled minnows
riffle the shallow
where I wade.

Fingerlings rise
in the pooled jade
at amber flies,
but only
fish-hawk hover
or kingfisher eye
can see below
the current-run
and river-race
to the legend
lying dark
in slow-finned grace.

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And I, who lost
the rainbow risen
in the torrent
of my need,
cast and cast
again where he
lies deep while
his torn gills bleed.

And the dreamer hawk
high over that pool
in the streaming air
cries high and cool.

Heron

In the copper marsh
I saw a stilted heron
wade the tidal wash

and I, who caught no fish,
thought the grass barren
and that jade inlet harsh

until the quick-billed splash
of the long-necked heron
fulfilled my hunter's wish.

Then in the rising rush
of those great wings, far on
I saw the herring flash

and drop. And the dash
of lesser wings in the barren
marsh flew through my flesh.

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SAUL BELLOW

Mintouchian

I SEE BEFORE ME NEXT A FELLOW named Mintouchian, who is an Armenian, of course. We are sitting together in a Turkish bath having a conversation, except that Mintouchian is doing most of the talking, explaining various facts of existence to me, by allegory, mostly. The time is a week before Stella and I were married and I shipped out.

This Mintouchian was a monument of a person, with his head very abrupt at the back, as Armenian heads tend sometimes to be, but lionlike in front, with red cheekbones. He had legs on him like that statue of Clemenceau on the Champs Elysees, where Clemenceau is striding against a wind and is thinking of bread and war, and the misery and the grandeur, going on with last strength in his long-johns and gaiters.

Sitting together in this little white-tile room, Mintouchian and I were quite pals in spite of differences of age and income—Mintouchian was supposed to be loaded. He looked overpowering, and he had tones in his voice like the dumping of coal. This must have done him good in court, as he was a lawyer. He was a friend of a friend of Stella whose name was Agnes Kuttner. Agnes lived in big style in an apartment off Fifth Avenue by the embassy of San Domingo, furnished in Empire, with tremendous mirrors and chandeliers, Chinese screens, alabaster birds of night, thick drapes, and all luxuries like that. She went around to auction rooms and bought up treasures of the Romanoffs and Hapsburgs; she herself came from Vienna. Mintouchian had set up a trust-fund for her, so she wasn't at all in the business of antiques, and her apartment was his home away from home, as hotels sometimes falsely speak of themselves. His other home was also in New York, but his wife was an invalid. Every evening he went and had dinner with her, served by her nurse in the bedroom. But before this he had visited Agnes. Usually his chauffeur was driving him across Central Park at 7:45 for the meal with his wife.

The reason why I was with him in the bath this particular afternoon was that Stella had gone shopping with Agnes for the wedding. These two, Agnes and Mintouchian, were the only

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people we ever saw when I got liberty from the base on weekends. He enjoyed taking us to Toots Shor's or the Diamond Horseshoe, I think, and other scarlet-and-gold-door places. The one time I tried to pick up the tab, he pushed me away. I would have had to borrow from Stella to pay it. But Mintouchian was very open-handed, a grand good-time Charlie. Almost always in evening clothes of Rembrandt blackness, with his red-edged eyes and craggy head and ears, and as if smelling the sands and savannahs with his flat nose, but with a smile of spin-on-the-music, spend-the-money; his teeth were long, and he was ever so slightly feline-whiskered to go with his corrupt, intelligent wrinkles and expanding mouth. Amid the ladies he didn't let go with his mouth, but now when he sat like a village headman of the south of Asia in his carnival-colors towel, he did; and while conversing more man to man he was pinching himself under the eyes to make the bags disappear—his yellow toenails were lacquered with clear polish, except the small toes grievously buried in the lifeworn foot with its skinful of vessels. I wondered if he was really one of those hot-to-the-touch and perilous guys like Zaharoff or Juan March, or the Swedish Match King or Jake the Barber or Three-Finger Brown. Stella said he had money he hadn't even folded yet. He certainly was laying out plenty for Agnes, whom he had met in Cuba; he paid her husband a remittance to stay there. However, even though I found out that Mintouchian wasn't strictly honest, he was never a rogue's gallery character. To get his legal education, as a matter of fact, he had played the organ in silent movies. But he was a crack lawyer now, and had global business interests, and moreover he was a lettered person and reader. It was one of his curiosities to figure out historical happenings like the building of the Berlin-Bagdad Railway or the Battle of Tannenberg, and he furthermore knew a lot about the lives of Martyrs. He was another of those persons who will arise to me with life-counsels and illumination throughout my entire earthly pilgrimage.

I couldn't figure out what he saw in Agnes, who was obviously the boss over him. Her eyes were deep brown, of an aristocratic favorite of cafes and carriages of Imperial days, although she must have been only a child in those times. And what's more, she had a slight depression on either side of her turned-up nose which made her look not exactly of an open nature. Nevertheless, she was Stella's friend, and Mintouchian loved her. This made me

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think of the deep wishes of elderly people, or desires unslayable short of total demolition by death.

"Death!" Mintouchian said it himself. He was describing how he was subject to strokes. He said, "I don't want to make you gloomy, so close to your wedding."

"Oh, no, sir, you couldn't make me gloomy. I love Stella too much to consider this."

"Well, I won't say that I was as happy as you, but I was also very feeling when I got married. Maybe it came from playing the mood-music, which I was then doing. For sea adventures I'd play *Fingal's Cave.* For Rudolph Valentino, *Orientale,* César Cui, Tchaikowsky *Sehnsucht.* Also *Poet and Peasant. You* try to fight this stuff, when Milton Sills sees Conway Tearle didn't go down on the Titanic, or something. I was playing it all from my book on Torts, boning up for the bar exam. But all the same those were times of emotion. Or maybe you think this is guff?"

"No, why?"

"You think I'm a bandit, only you wouldn't say it on a bet. You fight your malice too much."

"Everybody says so. It's as if you were supposed to have low opinions. I'd never say I was angelic, but I respect as much as I can."

Mintouchian said, "In one day of practice I see more than you could imagine if it was a project. The Balzac *Comédie Humaine* is child's play in comparison. I wake up in the morning and have to ask myself, now in the case of *Shiml versus Shiml,* who is screwing who? Who is going to be in worse shape in the end? The man who takes the child away from the living in sin mother? The lover who makes her give up the kid to avoid the publicity so it won't harm his business? The mother who does anything for the lover? *Ribono shel Olam!*"

I was surprised by this phrase, which he explained as follows: "My father was janitor of a synagogue, and I hung around the cellar. I had an uncle who was a colonel in the Boer War. Who is what? So if history casts a strange or even ridiculous light on us, we are still all serious, aren't we? We die anyway." He went back to the subject of his strokes. "Here several years ago, I was sitting on the toilet figuring a big deal mentally when suddenly the Angel of Death plucked me by the nose. My mind turned black. I fell on my face. I think if my belly hadn't been in the

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way to break the force I might have been killed. As it was, the blood from my nose sprayed the door like seltzer. Which, in my vanity, I had shut. Then by and by the spark of life came back to me. My mind filled again with the typical thought and light of Mintouchian. Now, I reflected, you're Mintouchian again. As if I had an option. Do I have to come back Mintouchian, including the distressing parts? Yes, because to live is to be Mintouchian, my dear man. I went over all my secrets and found they were still in place. I still didn't know who was screwing whom, and I crept into my bed and shivered from the touch of death.

"But I was saying," he gave me a genial smile with heartfelt squint and then he yawned and enjoyed the golden light. "How a guy struggles with malice. How life goes beyond the conscience of nice, well-reared people. A good upbringing stops them from knowing what *they* think even. Because we all think the same, more or less. You love Stella, all right, don't you?"

"Like I never loved anyone before."

"That's swell. That's what I call answering like a man. When is your birthday?"

"In January."

"I'd have sworn to it. So is mine. I believe the highest types are born in January. It's barometric, you can look it up in Ellsworth Huntington. The parents make love in May when the organism is healthiest and then the best specimens are conceived. If you want children you should plan to knock up your dear one in the spring. Ancient wisdom is right, and June is the best month for mating. Now science comes lately and finds it out. But what I wanted to say about your bride, *even* she, is that she's no different from the rest of us except more gifted and beautiful. It is absolutely certain that she has thought of the future both with and without you.

I should worry, I should care,
I should marry a millionaire,
He should die and I should cry
I should marry another guy.

But this has taken place in inner consciousness, which is outlaw and accepts no check. What of it? Life is possible anyhow. Except that even legitimate and reasonable things have to come through this Mongolia, or clear-light desert minus trees. What do we respect more than commerce and industry? But when Mr. Cecil Rhodes of the British Empire weeps many tears because he

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can't do business with the blazing stars, this is not decadence but inner consciousness speaking over all the highest works of presumptuous man."

I was deeply wounded when he spoke of Stella in this way. Where did he get off, this rude bastard, having her bump me off in her inner consciousness. I burned with resentment. "First you talk about ancient wisdom," I said, angry, "and then you take a crack at love."

"Well I'm a son of a bitch!" he said, getting up in the turkish heat and re-wrapping the towel. "I didn't mean to hurt any feelings. Damn! If I did in this idle conversation to while away time, please forgive me. I see you really are, *really,* in love. God bless you for such noble feelings. You're going to ship out soon, too, and the danger as well as separation from the loved one has stirred up natural emotions. But this little song of little girls also is ancient wisdom. This is not a reason for cynicism, but pride in the conquest of nature. The human mind has bounded the exploding oceans of universal space; the head has swallowed up the empyrean. But you shouldn't overlook also how much conniving goes on.

"Listen, since we're talking, let me give you a few examples from my practice of what goes on in other parts of the soul. A few years ago a client's wife reports she has lost a valuable bracelet. Perfectly trustworthy woman, and mother of three, a wealthy husband who has given her a hundred thousand dollars worth of property only keeping the power-of-attorney for himself. The bracelet is lost? Very well. It's just a routine matter for the company. They investigate, come back to the husband and tell him, 'Your wife did not lose this bracelet, she gave it to her lover who was broke.' Yoy, indignation! 'My wife, a lover? My respected spouse, mother of children, who shows me constant affection and proofs of loyalty? My dear wife, my beloved of years?' 'Nevertheless, her can has been over a barrel, she has spread' or equivalent. This poor man. Heart shattered! How could it be! Imagine his pain and bewilderment that she should have such a secret from him. What a failure of life when he worked so hard that there should be a certain, guaranteed reason that life might last longer than from Thursday to Saturday. If anything deserves tears, this does. However, he mustn't take the word of the insurance investigator, so he comes to me and I get him a private eye. He comes back with the same facts, that this

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lover is a bum with a prison record for pimping and fencing. They show the poor husband a photo, even, so he can describe this character. Thick nose, long sideburns. You know the type. Well, the poor fellow is going crazy. And now he finds that in the whole suburb where he lives he's the only one who didn't know about it. They're seen in the car, parked all over the vicinity. The woods, the bushes. It comes down on him like a busted house. 'Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do ye see it now?' "

Oh, the poor guy! My heart broke for him.

"People start to tell him, 'Throw her out, man! Don't be a damn chump. This other guy has been ramming her and been her fancy-man at your expense.' So not able to stand it any more, he accuses her. Why, she denies everything. Every single thing. He brings out names, dates, places, therefore, and there's nothing she can say. All is true. Then she says, 'I won't leave this house and the children, they're mine.' He comes to me and asks advice. All the law is on his side. He can throw her in the street if he wants. But does he want? No! . . ."

Like the wife of Hosea who fooled around, I thought. "Thou shalt abide for me many days."

"And I'll tell you something else. She loved her husband, too. That's how clouded the situation can be. She gave up the fancy pimp. And then the neighbors saw her and the husband in the movies holding hands and kissing like young lovers."

I was glad it had turned out like that, and they forgave each other. My heart gave a happy bound that they had made it.

I said, "You have to pity the wife also."

"You have to pity her more," said Mintouchian, "because she had to do the lying and lead the two lives. This secrecy is what the real burden is. You come home still panting or dripping or dizzy from an encounter. And what's here? Another world, another life; you are another self. You also know exactly what you are doing. Exactly as a druggist when he goes from one prescription to another. Just the right amount of atropine or arsenic. There'd better be. There'd better!" Mintouchian said with a kind of personal barbarism or force of heart. He couldn't stop it up. "You come home. 'Hello, husband or wife.' 'What was in the office today?' 'Just the usual.' 'I see you changed the sheets.' 'I also sent out the insurance premium.' 'That's good.' So you are another person. Where are the words you spoke an hour

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before? Gone! Where is Central? Oh my dear friend, Central is listening in from Mongolia. Do you say a *double* life? It's secret over secret, mystery and then infinity sign stuck on to that. So who knows the ultimate, and where is the hour of truth?

"Of course," he said, "this has got nothing to do with you." He grinned and tried to get brighter, but there was some sort of darkness at this time in the superilluminated little sweat room. He went on after this effort, as follows: "But just for the interest of it, I give you another case: There was a rich couple I had before the war. Husband handsome, wife gorgeous. Connecticut, Yale and so forth background. The husband goes to Italy on a business trip, meets an Italian lady and has an *affaire de coeur* and then he indiscreetly corresponds with the lady after he comes back. The wife catches a letter of love he kept in his back pocket. Not only did he keep it, March, but where the words of the dear hand were faded by his perspiration, he restored them in his own hand. Then the wife comes to me with blood in her eye. Now I know for a fact that while he was gone, she had herself a ball with someone, a man friend. But now she wants the husband punished. Because she caught *him!* She wants to go to Italy with the husband, confront the Italian lady and have the husband deny before them both he ever loved her. Otherwise, divorce. Naturally, I can't tell the husband what to do, and he goes. Seven thousand mile trip to perform this necessary act. They then come home, and what do you think? You're an intelligent man, you know what then."

"He finds out about her . . . Listen," I said, now smelling a rat. "How are these stories supposed to apply, just now, before my marriage. Are you saying that I should put the shoe on to see if it fits?" The thought made me boil.

"Hup! Now, don't take it personally. I never said these stories applied to you. They probably apply only in general. Would I say anything against Miss Chesney? Not only that she's Agnes's friend, but I wouldn't be a killjoy and interfere with genuine love, which I see all over you.

"You may be as interested as I was, though, in what a clever fellow once said to me about the connection of love and adultery. On any certain day, when you're happy, you know it can't last, but the weather will change, the health will be sickness, the year will end and also life will end. On another day there'll be a different lover. The face you're kissing will change to some other

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face, and so will your face be replaced. It can't be helped, this guy said. Of course he was a lousy bastard himself and a counterfeit nogood mooch, and he was in and out of Bellevue, and women supported him all his life; he deserted his kid and nobody could depend on him. But love *is* adultery, he said, and expresses change. You make your peace with change. Another city, another woman, a different bed, but you're the same and so you must be flexible. You kiss the woman and you show how you love your fate, and you worship and adore the changes of life. You obey this law. Whether or not this bum was right, may God hate his soul, don't think you don't have to obey the laws of life."

My strange teacher, for he certainly was teaching, said further, "Erratic is nothing. Only system taps the will of the universe."

"I want to obey those laws," I said, "I'm not trying to get out from under. I never did try."

By now the sweat was running very fast down both our faces, and his carnival towel, which had fallen from his fat chest and armpits down to the everglades moss of his belly, was like the robe of a sage. I would never agree that love had to be adultery. Never! Why, imagine! Even if I had to admit that many lovers were adulterers, such as Paolo and Francesca or Anna Karenina, Grandma Lausch's favorite. Which led my mind toward suffering that got mixed with love. As eating the damaged fruit so as not to offend the gods, for whom pure joy is reserved.

He looked as if he were grinning, with great, bland, pouring-faced kindness, like a sage, prophet or Guru, a prince of experience with his jewel toes. I wanted him to give me wisdom.

"Why do you have to think that the thing that kills you is the thing that you stand for? Because you are the author of your death. What is the weapon? The nails and hammer of your character. What is the cross? Your own bones on which you gradually weaken. And the husband or the wife gets the other to do the deed. 'Kind spouse, you will make me my fate,' they might as well say, and tell them, and show them, how. The fish wills water, and the bird wills air, and you and me our dominant idea."

"Can you say what is your dominant idea, Mr. Mintouchian?"

He answered readily, "Secrets. Society makes us have some, of course. The brotherhood of man wants to let us out of them by the power of confession. But I must wish secrets. I will be known by secrets at my death, like St. Blas who was killed by wool-combs and was made the patron saint of woolcombers.

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"Complications, lies, lies and lies!" he said. "Disguises, vaudevilles, multiple personalities, diseases, conversations. Even in a few minutes conversation, do you realize how many times what you feel is converted before it comes out as what you say? Somebody tells you *A*. Your response is *B*. *B* you can't say, so you transform it, you put it through the coils of your breast. From DC to AC, increased four hundred volts, filtered. So instead of *B* there comes out Gamma sub one. The longer the train of transformation, the worse the stink of $Gamma_1$. Mind you, I'm a great admirer of our species. I stand in awe of the genius of the race. But a large part of this genius is devoted to lying and seeming what you aren't. We love when this man Ulysses comes back in disguise for his revenge. But suppose he forgot what he came back for and just sat around day in day out in the disguise. This happens to many a frail spirit who forgets what the disguises are for, doesn't understand complexity, or how to return to simplicity. From telling different things to everyone, forgets what the case is originally and what he wants himself. How rare is simple thought and pure heartedness. Even a moment of pure heartedness I bow to, down to the ground. That's why I think well of you when you tell me you're in love. I appreciate this durability, and I'm a lover myself."

God bless Mintouchian! What a good man! He really paid attention, and I returned him love for love.

"You will understand, Mr. Mintouchian, if I tell you that I have always tried to become what I am. But it's a frightening thing. Because what if what I am by nature isn't good enough?" I was close to tears as I said it to him. "I suppose I better, anyway, give in and be it. I will never force the hand of fate to create a better Augie March, nor change the time to an age of gold."

"That is exactly right. You must take your chance on what you are. And you can't sit still. I know this double poser, that if you make a move you may lose but if you sit still you will decay. But what will you lose? You will not invent better than God or nature or turn yourself into the man who lacks no gift or development before you make the move. This is not given to us."

"That's right, and I'm grateful to you," I said. "I owe you much for this explanation."

This took place on the fifty-eighth story of a building in midtown Manhattan, behind sliding glass doors. No use being so blasé as not to mention it.

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"It is better to die what you are than to live a stranger forever," he said.

After this he concentrated in silence for a while, as though he were counting drops from an invisible dropper. What were they drops of, of pure essence, or of gall?

"I think you will be interested in a matter that's bothered me the last few months." Gall. I saw that now. His large eyes grew heavy and sad.

"The reason why I told of a bracelet before," he said, "is that I have jewelry on my mind on account of a diamond ring that Mrs. Kuttner, Agnes, lost several months ago. She said she was mugged in Central Park while walking the dog in the evening. It happens of course that people are mugged . . .

"But why wear a diamond ring while walking a dog?

"That is explained by the fact that we had a date. On her throat finger marks. Good enough evidence, huh? Also she was found lying on a path between the Met and the children's playground. The cops took her home. Pretty convincing, isn't it?"

"It sounds absolutely. . . ."

"She collected the insurance of five thousand dollars. And now I tell you in strict confidence that she did it all herself."

"What?"

"Choked herself unconscious. The marks on her throat she made with her own fingers."

"How could she!"

"*She* could."

The vision of the Vienna beauty choking herself in the night park stupefied me.

"How do you know?"

"Because one of her friends is keeping the ring for her."

"But what is she trying to put over?"

"That's the whole thing. I give her all the money she needs. Plus sending a check to her husband in Cuba. So what does she want this extra swindle for?"

"Maybe it's just for social-security money, like? Have you provided for her?"

"She is very managing about property. That's my best hope. Provided? Of course. I gave her a house on the Island. But what if it isn't that? You get the pitch? She has secrets from me; she's double-lifing me."

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"It might turn out to be something very ordinary, like a brother in trouble she doesn't want to tell you about. Or she's tired of just being handed money and wants to *make* money."

He was aware that I was trying to comfort him.

"There must be easier ways. No, what if it's to pay off somebody? Ah, law practice makes me very suspicious. But don't you see where I'm at," Mintouchian asked me. "With my outlook?"

Sometimes on short acquaintance you can get very closely knitted to someone. And Mintouchian and I now were.

On this particular Saturday, Stella and Agnes not showing up because of a misunderstanding about the arrangements, Mintouchian became very nervous as we waited in his office for them. Dinner hour with his wife was approaching, that was why. Finally he sent word by his chauffeur to the women that we'd rejoin them at half-past nine, and then took me home with him in a cab, across the Park.

So I met Mrs. Mintouchian. I couldn't figure out her complaint. She was dressed in a quilted blue robe and her hair was gray. She was dignified, if not haughty; I felt her conduct like a kind of touching athletic prowess.

She gave me a very upstage reception.

"Harold, the martinis have to be mixed in the kitchen," she said to Mintouchian. So he went out, and as soon as he left she said, almost with violence. "Who are you, young man?"

"Me? I'm a client of Mr. Mintouchian. You see, I'm just about to get married."

"I don't expect you to tell me anything," she said. "I know that Harold has his secrets. I mean he *thinks* he has. I really know all about him, because I think about him all the time. It isn't so hard if you spend *all* your time thinking about somebody. I don't have to leave this room."

I was astonished. I felt my eyes get wide.

I said, "I haven't known Mr. Mintouchian long, Ma'am, but in my opinion he's a great man."

"Oh, you realize that. He is great, even if he's all too human."

It awed me that when this lion, Mintouchian, sobbed in the brakes of, he thought, most solitude, this invalid was standing listening behind him.

But then he came carrying the glasses and the conversation was finished.

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JOSEPH BENNETT

Uptown Express

A surfing party from the isle of task
  Drowned the leaden weight-marks of their eyes.
They did not come to swim, they came to bask,
  Filtering the unhappy sunlight from their skies.
  It was not their odor but their cries
Drove the warbling sappers from our shores.
  It was not the blackbirds but the flies
Attacked the bright circumference of their cores,
The wheels that run at large beneath the trembling railway floors.

Blind after blind the long-line subway flies,
  Timed to the writhing of its element.
Within, the public turns with calcined eyes,
  Spiralling at man's advértisement;
  Sign upon sign the itch incontinent
Spills at the holes in the eye of dazzling brain;
  So carrion shine in the gleam of excrement,
Lighting up the faces in a porcelain terrain,
And so condors drop upon a prey already slain.

Blind now a man, with stick's advértisement,
  Beats at the silence in the metal floor of cars.
Eyeless the blind, yet still incontinent,
  Forcing the doors, to cross these shifting bars,
  Shaking a cup that flame of mercy chars,
He seeks the milk and honey on these signs.
  No matter how the driving platform jars,
No matter where his requiem inclines,
He is the gray flamingo of these swift electric shrines.

Rage at the human flourishes in cars
  Where wrist to wrist the spirits breathe their last.
Rage burns, and turn of spirit chars.
  It is the crush of eagles standing fast.
  Wheel upon wheel the diving cars drive past.
O arks which bear the dense electric rays
  Staunching up the flow of human caste,
Your lamps have drenched the heads which stand ablaze,
Your galleries go plunging in the silt of flashing clays.

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ISABELLA GARDNER

Cock A' Hoop

How struts my love my cavalier
How crows he like a chanticleer
How softly I am spurred my dear
Our bed is feathered with desire
And this yard safe from fox and fire.

But spurless on the dung-hill, dead,
The soldier's blood is rooster red.
His seed is spent and no hen fed.
Alas no chick of this sweet cock
Will speak for Christ at dawn o'clock.

The Only Relic

Hunting for coppers of Alaskan braves
in a forest of totem poles and graves
I found a skull no bigger than my eye,
greenish white, light as breath, and the only
relic there. I wondered who had to die
and leave just a bony scream and lonely
holes where eyelids blinked, and no arms no loins.

Back home (with no beads no feathers no coins)
I hid the skull in a blue box with rings
I never wear these days and jagged things
crystal and turquoise I shall never mend
and moonstone cuff-links that I mean to send
back. The delicate anguished rigid shout
is still intact. But I shall take it out
now, place it on the mantlepiece, and wait
till children hide the fragments in the grate.

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LOUIS O. COXE

Beddoes: The Mask of Parody

THE POETRY OF THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES should find in our time a place denied it in its own if only because we are today interested in deviation for its own sake. Beddoes' life, curious and expatriate, a life that shows him as radical, scientist, psychiatric case and necrophile, alone would attract our age. The poetry, however, is the subject here, and it is a poetry of a sort that seems to me to offer a way out for the modern writer while it exists in its own world as a strange, viable creation.

Beddoes wished to be a dramatist. His major work, *Death's Jest-Book*, shows at once the limitations, potentialities and achieved merits of his dramatic verse. Its texture derives from morality and symbol, from poetic language, and these are the vehicles of the drama as exciting theater. A packed, metaphorical idiom, bristling with allusion and learning, a boisterous humor that moves deliberately into the grotesque, a sense of terror before the omnipresence of death: such is the element of the extraordinary play in the composition of which Beddoes spent the most productive years of his life.

"To have my way, in spite of your tongue and reason's teeth, tastes better than Hungary wine; and my heart beats in a honey-pot now I reject you and all sober sense." So speaks Mandrake, the disciple of Paracelsus, but it might well be Beddoes himself. Yet it was not in a "dérèglement de tous les sens" that he sought a freedom, but in an elusive grand synthesis in search of which he raided the culture, artistic and scientific, of the west. His poetry clearly reflects this search. From Hebrew lore to contemporary anatomy, from Pythagoras to Shelley, he roves back and forth through history, and the poetry is dense with references, literary and scientific, which reinforce and accentuate a genuine originality. *Death's Jest-Book* may at times become pastiche on the one hand and chaos on the other. Brought up on a diet of the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights, Beddoes, like all his contemporaries who tried "dramaturgy", never got free of the influence. Yet in this instance it is a happy fault, for no other of the

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romantic playwrights caught the idiom they echoed as fully as he did, and none had the sense of drama in the very feel of the verse to anything like the extent notable in the best parts of *Death's Jest-Book.*

The play's plot is, "God save us, a thing of naught", or rather, of a great deal too much, most of it confused. The satanic jester, Isbrand, usurps Melveric's dukedom—partly in vengeance for Melveric's murder of Isbrand's father and his brother Wolfram. As the plot to seize the duchy of Grussau culminates, Isbrand is betrayed and killed, Melveric drawn living into the grave, various other characters are variously slain. There is a sub-plot providing love interest, but plot is not the issue here.

To call such a congeries of implausibilities absurd is only proper; the action is eccentric; one cannot find a tragic hero or a single conflict. Beddoes alters his scheme and his intent more than once; the sub-plotting is at best irrelevant and at worst confusing as well as dull. The dramatic and poetic excitement resides in the by-play, and that for the most part concerns Isbrand, the demonic fool of Death, in whose actions and speeches we can find the essence of Beddoes' poetic gift and an adumbration at least of a form of tragedy.

Here excess is the key. Excess, calculated or at times merely chaotic, crowds into action, structure and metaphor. It is in this respect above all that Beddoes is a poet worthy of our attention, for he did not fear a risk, in particular that most dangerous of all risks: being caught out in a generalization or a cliché. And perhaps because he was remote from his contemporaries, because he was unafraid of traditional, stock situations, his best dramatic verse is exciting, in language, metaphor and movement. He had grasped what too few dramatists today believe, that the vehicle of a play is not character but language, a particular language that is theatrical in that it conveys the immediate action while it points ahead to impending tragedy. Consider this passage, in which Isbrand converses with one of his henchmen over the body of the treacherously slain Wolfram.

> ISBRAND: . . . This was one who would be constant in friendship and the pole wanders: one who would be immortal, and the light that shines upon his pale forehead now, through yonder gewgaw window, undulated from its star hundreds of years ago. That is constancy, that is life. O moral nature!

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> SIEGFRIED: 'Tis well that you are reconciled to his lot and your own.
> ISBRAND: Reconciled! A word out of a love tale, that's not in my language. No, no. I am patient and still and laborious, a good contented man; peaceable as an ass chewing a thistle; and my thistle is revenge. I do but whisper it now: but hereafter I will thunder the word, and I shall shoot up gigantic out of this pismire shape, and hurl the bolt of that revenge.

The modern obsession with personality concerns Beddoes little. Somehow he knew that character as such is one thing in life and quite another in art, in the drama. In either case seeing a man as a mere agglomeration of motives or qualities is little help and no explanation. Since in a play what interests the spectator is the thing done; the way it is done, and its effect on people or on further action, the establishing of character is merely one way of making an action seem credible or interesting. In the romantic period, one that was curious about emotion, morality and ideas, "character" of an intricate sort had little function in drama, for there was more than enough character available in actual life. In our day, when symbol and thing symbolized have split apart, "personality" has triumphed, with psychiatric quirks the stuff of drama and life alike. Beddoes, indifferent to this concern, instinctively returned to something like a doctrine of humors, of ruling passions, since his mind increasingly reached out for absolutes: the meaning of death, the vanity of human wishes, the nature of human freedom. What better convention, what more fascinating ritual, could he have chosen than the old revenge tragedy, with all its layers of association, its formal appeal to the spectators' powers of suspending disbelief, its open invitation to rhetoric and excess? We must not look to *Death's Jest-Book* for originality of motive or plot; if there is a particular view of the action it would appear to be a double one. We are to see the events as deviations from a norm of moral behaviour and consequently to condemn them, but we are not to empathize automatically. One part of the mind must be reserved to participate in the poetic and dramatic processes, to judge of what allows one to be moved, and simultaneously to say: "That was a fine touch."

What is new about this? It is so old that a revival of the attitude in the theater today would create an effect of extreme novelty that no experiment with gadgetry could rival. Beddoes

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found in the Jacobean drama certain habits of mind that corresponded to his own:

> ISBRAND: . . . Isbrand, thou tragic fool,
> Cheer up. Art thou alone? Why so should be
> Creators and destroyers. I'll go brood,
> And strain my burning and distracted soul
> Against the naked spirit of the world
> Till some portent's begotten.

Beddoes, unlike his Isbrand, knows that man is less than angel, and indeed at the end of the play Isbrand has well earned his cap and bells. "For now indeed Death makes a fool of me," he says as he dies. And this was the same Isbrand who had earlier defied the universe:

> I have a bit of FIAT in my soul,
> And can myself create my little world.
> Had I been born a four-legged child, methinks
> I might have found the steps from dog to man,
> And crept into his nature. Are there not
> Those that fall down out of humanity,
> Into the story where the four-legged dwell?

The lesson we can learn from Beddoes may go something like this: it is all a risk, this writing poetry and plays. Yet if art is going to be different enough from life to be worth bothering about, then make that difference exciting, excessive, bold. Poetry must reassemble the bones of the language and recreate "the bloody, soul-possessèd weed called man", quickened out of sheer art, sheer creation.

But of course Beddoes is no playable dramatist. How stage the impossible slaughters, poisonings, tilts and apparitions? Perhaps there is no physical bar, but other more serious obstacles would confront the director. Beddoes had no stage craft, knew nothing at all about the theatre, his head full of Schiller and Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen*, of ideas about the stage that would make a modern producer shudder. And with reason. However promising the work of the inexperienced playwright may prove, it is only that. Beddoes had no chance to use a stage or to see his work performed; how could he have learned? Yet despite this, he had

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an attribute that is equally indispensable: he knew that language can be dramatic of itself and was able to make it so. No small measure of his success with dramatic language comes from his preoccupation with extremes, of subject and of expression. At times this becomes almost surrealist (if I understand the term), the driving to an extreme of fancy a conceit or an insight:

> ISBRAND: . . . One has said, that time
> Is a great river running to eternity.
> Methinks 'tis all one water, and the fragments,
> That crumble off our ever dwindling life,
> Dropping into't, first make the twelve-houred circle,
> And that spreads outward to the great round Ever.
> THORWALD: You're fanciful.
> ISBRAND: A very ballad-maker. . . .

There is often sarcasm or perhaps contempt in Isbrand's tone; he shares with the diabolic figures of much romantic verse a mocking attitude; like Goethe's Mephistopheles he has the "denying spirit", though it is certainly not as objectively expressed. Yet he also shares some of the qualities of the Shakespearean fool, since his wisdom continually clashes with the nonsense of Everyman. The vengeance Isbrand seeks, the power he would usurp, becomes under Beddoes' hand generalized, as though the Duke and his Grussau are mere surrogates for a contempt Isbrand (and Beddoes) feels for humanity: "As I live I grow ashamed of the duality of my legs, for they and the apparel, forked or furbelowed, upon them constitute humanity; the brain no longer; and I wish I were an honest fellow of four shins when I look into the notebook of your absurdities. I will abdicate." Isbrand is the intellectual who scorns the court, the world of mediocrity, yet maladjusted as he may be, there is no self-pity in him. "How I despise all such mere men of muscle," he says, and proceeds with his plan to seize the dukedom. If the world will not conform to his desire, he will force it, by the power of his intellect, to serve him. No irony here, save what eventuates in dramatic irony; Isbrand is deadly serious, committed to a program that entails convulsions in the state. This intellectual, this eccentric of many masks and desires, will get beyond human weakness if he die for it; and this is true of Beddoes' writing of the role. Isbrand, when in his more playful mood, resorts to the grotesque, to a species of surrealism

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as the lighter expression of a demonic will. He is conscious that he is at court, "and there it were a sin to call anything by its right name." Though he "abdicates", ceases formally to be a jester, yet the role of poet is ready for him, another mask that he may wear until the plot is ripe and he may put off disguises. We can often identify Beddoes with Isbrand if only because the surrealist tone of much of the poetry in *Death's Jest-Book* derives from the dominant attitudes of Beddoes himself, from his recondite learning, his necrophilia, his passion for an all-containing synthesis. The grotesque element in the poetry is mask—the playful aspect, at times grim, behind which Beddoes hides his contempt for man as he is, his yearning for another form more suited to man's will to change and grow. Hence death is welcome, for it may mean ultimately rebirth, a new and more appropriate form. Poetry, then, should distort life and all normal views of it. That is what Isbrand does when he wears the mask of poet. It is Beddoes' mask too, and both their tragedies; to make man over is impossible, yet the unusual man must try. Tragedy comes from that trial. Poetry comes from expressing it. A poetic tragedy is an excessive showing of excess.

If Beddoes' idea of tragedy seems inadequate, too far removed from the possibility of alternatives, too personal, it is at least modern, one that should find sympathetic consideration today. Isbrand, as he is dying, understands that he "in a wicked masque would play the Devil" and that there can be ruin only for such a player. The diabolism strikes home. Isbrand further says: "But jealous Lucifer himself appeared / And bore him—whither? I shall know tomorrow." If there is to be real tragedy, a man must know in advance the risks he takes; both Beddoes and Isbrand see risks in the ways taken, but they do not know for sure the nature of the risks. They will "know tomorrow". In the faint of heart, such uncertainty leads to scepticism, to irony, to the disillusionment of the sophisticated child. In those strong enough to face the bitterness of wanhope, there is this resort: gesture, mask, and finally, parody. We can find a full expression of this in one of the play's songs, a curious piece of work that revolted Beddoes' friend "Barry Cornwall" and is of one temper with the unease conveyed to Browning, who would neither release nor reread the Beddoes manuscripts entrusted to him. This song shows us what Beddoes was after, shows us perhaps why no tragedy could ever contain it.

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"What is the lobster's tune while he is boiling?" asks Isbrand, and begins his "Song". Whether one looks at the poem as a mere burlesque or as a whole genre by itself, there is still this question: how does critic or reader deal with such a work? For if we can call this irony, the word has finally lost any real meaning, and if we dismiss it as fanciful, grotesque, or Freudian we miss the point, a point we would do well to seize.

Song by ISBRAND

Squats on a toadstool under a tree
A bodiless childfull of life in the gloom,
Crying with frog voice, 'What shall I be?
Poor unborn ghost, for my mother killed me
Scarcely alive in her wicked womb.
What shall I be? Shall I creep to the egg
That's cracking asunder yonder by Nile,
    And with eighteen toes
    And a snuff-taking nose,
Make an Egyptian crocodile?
Sing, "Catch a mummy by the leg
    And crunch him with an upper jaw,
    Wagging tail and clenching claw;
    Take a bill-full from my craw,
    Neighbor raven, caw, o caw,
    Grunt, my crocky, pretty maw!
        And give a paw."

'Swine, shall I be you? Thou art a dear dog;
But for a smile, and kiss, and pout,
I much prefer *your* black-lipped snout,
    Little, gruntless, fairy hog,
    Godson of the hawthorn hedge.
For, when Ringwood snuffs me out,
And 'gins my tender paunch to grapple,
Sing, " 'Twixt your ancles visage wedge
    And roll up like an apple."

'Serpent Lucifer, how do you do?
Of your worms and your snakes I'd be one or two;
    For in this dear planet of wool and of leather
'Tis pleasant to need neither shirt, sleeve, nor shoe,
    And have arm, leg, and belly together.
    Then aches your head, or are you lazy?

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Sing, "Round your neck your belly wrap,
Tail atop, and make your cap
Any bee and daisy."

'I'll not be a fool like the nightingale
Who sits up all midnight without any ale,
Making a noise with his nose;
Nor a camel, although 'tis a beautiful back;
Nor a duck, notwithstanding the music of quack
And the webby, mud-patting toes.
I'll be a new bird, with the head of an ass,
Two pigs' feet, two men's feet, and two of a hen;
Devil-winged; dragon-bellied; grave-jawed, because grass
Is a beard that's soon shaved, and grows seldom again
Before it is summer; so cow all the rest;
The new Dodo is finished. O! come to my nest.'

Isbrand's song is parody, parody of a cosmology of a scientific generation that will commit any sin in the name of science. Autobiography apart, we can see parody, self-parody, in the Isbrand who sings this ballad and in him who later, on the eve of his own destruction, declares: "I have a bit of FIAT in my soul". One may play with ideas of evolution or metempsychosis if one chooses; certainly the Pythagorean theory was known to Beddoes. But it is the tone of mockery and excess that makes the poem wholly remarkable—unique in English verse. Poetry as play, serious and grim play but play none the less. One dares not label as nonsense a poem that explores with humor and learning the notion of man's free will, however idiosyncratically expressed. With his Mandrake, Beddoes might have said, "Thou knowest I hunger after wisdom as the Red Sea after ghosts", and it is not strange that of the masks he chose one of the most effective should be that of the alchemistic fool: "soul of a pickle-herring, body of a spagirical toss-pot, doublet of motley, and mantle of pilgrim." All of these personae were Beddoes, who had his bit of FIAT and died of it. If at times he doubted himself and his gifts, he never doubted that one of the proper functions of art is to show men their own folly, smallness and mortality: "O world, world! The gods and fairies left thee for thou were too wise; and now, thou Socratic star, thy demon, the great Pan, Folly, is parting from thee." It is the logical paradox in Beddoes that his science should retain strong traces of alchemy, his poetry retain a firm grip on a

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tradition while it went far from the beaten path, his morality return to a kind of doctrine of humors while his own nature developed most involutely.

Isbrand says of his "noble hymn to the belly gods", that " 'tis perhaps a little / Too sweet and tender, but that is the fashion; / Besides my failing is too much sentiment," but we must not consider this irony or mere sarcasm; it is one plane of the mask, this time a composite mask made up of every quality Beddoes found in the poet: fool, sage, demon, beast, and monster. What does his song show us if not the varied aspect of man's nature when he is most self-aware and creative? The "bodiless childfull of life" exerts will, a bit of FIAT, and selects at last no known form of life as its persona but the fabulous shape of the "new Dodo", a monstrous form of its own birthing, for the child owes no tie to the parent that aborted it. Beddoes' abortion is an "unborn ghost" inhabiting a limbo closer to the real world than we suspect; if it is to come to life it will do so through its own will and in no ordinary guise, for "the world's man-crammed; we want no more of them." The romantic agony of "anywhere, anywhere out of the world" was to Beddoes a real possibility, achievable through wisdom—science and art. These, energized by the will, could find the single secret of man's nature and force it to confess itself. That which much of *Death's Jest-Book* states with seriousness and full conviction, Isbrand's song parodies—not for the sake of burlesque but as another aspect of the face of life, of man: the fool, the poet, the monstrous abortion who yet wills and selects his own mask: "I'll be a new bird with the head of an ass." Man has such a head whether he knows it or not; "thou great-eared mind," Isbrand calls Mandrake. "The world will see its ears in a glass no longer," Mandrake laments now that he, the fool, is departing. "Every man is his own fool" and in his song Isbrand tells how to make the fool as unlike his usual self as possible, though however altered he may be, he will have "the head of an ass".

We can consider this song as characteristic of Beddoes in his best vain of parody: excess, conceit, and surrealism. Here is the very "fool sublimate", the formal arrangement of a disgust with human life that never makes the mistake of becoming pettish. Man has no place in the world of this song, nor will Beddoes allow his "new Dodo" any of man's features save his feet—two out of six, on equal ground with a pig's and a hen's. For the rest of the

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creature's anatomy Beddoes raids a representative stock of lore, finding actual and fabled beasts, a whole bestiary of humors and passions. "In this dear planet of wool and of leather" he finds monsters and beasts better equipped than man to withstand the rigors of climate, and a barnyard duck has a pleasanter sound than the nightingale, the foolish bird that "sits up all midnight without any ale, / Making a noise with his nose." All normal and man-made standards shall be thrown down, all laws abandoned, all nature refashioned to suit the individual will. This has as much of the ethical as the artistic and intellectual; if not precisely "dérèglement de tous les sens", something rather closer to a genuine rebirth of the spirit through wilful metamorphosis. Beddoes was far too serious as poet and scientist to write these verses with action in mind; this is the area of the grotesque, that portion of the poetic map where actuality and imagination meet in a balance so perfect that each mocks the other. We mistake the purpose of grotesque if we look in it for what is morbid or ironic or merely fanciful; it is a kind of vision which takes nothing seriously except itself, which comes from anger rather than sympathy, and which requires a lively sense of ugliness. To these ends nothing serves so well as a close association of the homely and the exotic, the exotic made homely and the homely alien. Hence, the "unborn ghost", while debating the appropriateness of becoming "an Egyptian crocodile", turns that formidable beast into a harmless absurdity, though the real nature is below this surface still. Again, addressing "serpent Lucifer", the child talks of demon and reptile as if each were innocuous, though we realize that such natures are to be considered preferable to the human. In the final stanza, Beddoes gives his sardonic contempt free rein; all beasts, all monstrous forms, real and fabled, are to join in the forming of the "new Dodo", and that portion of the "unborn ghost" not yet made flesh shall be cow: "So cow all the rest; / The new Dodo is finished. O come to my nest." Contempt and anger, finely controlled, temper the tone, and the poem rises to a conclusion in which mingle colloquial gusto and a sinister "invitation au voyage". As the song progresses, the rhythms become more marked, more solemn, belying the apparent lightness of statement; pauses are heavy and a broken line begins again after the caesura to rush through another line and a half, where suddenly the movement checks

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violently. With abrupt decision the creature completes its form and issues its sardonic invitation.

The world the creature asks us to enter is one of familiar shapes in strange combinations and positions. Entrance into such a world tests our acumen, for certain kinds of good poetry are so close to bad that the reader needs skill and taste in order to discriminate. Some kinds of bad work are more satisfying than some kinds of good, and the vices of a particular way of writing usually form the conditions of that writing's existence; that is, without the vices, there could be no writing of that sort at all. Beddoes had to be very derivative, bombastic, and coy in much of his poetry before he could suddenly generate sufficient heat to light off his power. Yet after Beddoes has made proper obeisance to the formal love-story, he can suddenly surcharge banality with poetry, as in the scene between Sibylla and the ghost of her murdered lover, Wolfram:

> WOLFRAM: . . . Dar'st die?
> A grave-deep question. Answer it religiously.
> SIBYLLA: . . . With him I loved, I dared.
> WOLFRAM: . . . With me and for me.
> I am a ghost. Tremble not; fear not me.
> The dead are ever good and innocent,
> And love the living. They are cheerful creatures,
> And quiet as the sunbeams, and most like,
> In grace and patient love and spotless beauty,
> The new-born of mankind. . . .

Similarly, in the more blood-curdling passages, one must keep a sharp lookout lest one mistake some fine poetry for fustian; they are both there:

> ATHULF: Great and voluptuous Sin now seize upon me,
> Thou paramour of Hell's fire-crowned king,
> That showedst the tremulous fairness of thy bosom
> In heaven, and so didst ravish the best angels. . . .

Surely bad enough. Yet Isbrand, a few lines later, tells Athulf:

> . . . Sire and mother
> And sister I had never, and so feel not
> Why sin 'gainst them should count so doubly wicked,
> This side o' th' sun. If you would wound your foe,

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> Get swords that pierce the mind: a bodily slice
> Is cured by surgeon's butter. . . .

If death is to a large extent the theme and subject of the play, Isbrand is death's jester, the fool of death who would turn the tables on his master only to become the more fool for his pains. At the last, Wolfram replaces on Isbrand's head the fool's cap; Sibylla's grave is decked with lilies of the valley, the plant that "bears bells":

> For even the plants, it seems, must have their fool,
> So universal is the spirit of folly;
> And whisper, to the nettles of her grave,
> 'King Death hath asses' ears'.

Isbrand in a sense becomes so closely identified with Death that it is with something of a shock that we finally discover him to be mortal—no supernatural creature, despite his "bit of FIAT", but a man and hence a fool. Early in the play he had tried to urge his laggard brother to join him in vengeance on the Duke; that was his greatest piece of folly, "for when he (his father's ghost) visits me in the night, screaming revenge, my heart forgets that my head wears a fool's cap. . ." If, as Mandrake says, "all days are foaled of one mother", no man can hope to escape his lot; then indeed Isbrand and Mandrake can never be other than they are: the jesters of the world. And in the final issue, of course, men who had been fools of life are finally capped in death, becoming jesters, mocking the living and mocked at by King Death, who wears asses' ears himself. "Human kind cannot bear very much reality," Beddoes would agree, and further shows that the result of man's overreaching himself can never be other than fatal:

> ISBRAND: . . . What shall we add to man,
> To bring him higher? I begin to think
> That's a discovery I soon shall make.
> Thus, owing naught to books, but being read
> In the odd nature of much fish and fowl,
> And cabbages and beasts, I've raised myself,
> By this comparative philosophy,
> Above your shoulders, my sage gentlemen.
> Have patience but a little, and keep still;
> I'll find means bye and bye of flying higher.

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Isbrand here forgets that he had earlier remarked to the apostate jester, Mandrake, "I mark by thy talk that thou commencest philosopher, and then thou art only a fellow servant out of livery": his own will, corrupted by power, has brought him to the point of believing he can transcend his humanity: "And man has tired of being merely human."

Much of *Death's Jest-Book* is fragmentary and suggestive. Occasionally there are prolepses of other poets, as in the passage immediately above. Or sometimes a packed parenthesis will suddenly lift the tone of a passage or take the reader, by powerful suggestion, into another dimension:

> ISBRAND: . . . Were I buried like him
> There in the very garrets of death's town,
> But six feet under earth, (that's the grave's sky)
> I'd jump up into life. . .
> ZIBA: For soon the floral necromant brought forth
> A wheel of amber, (such may Clotho use
> When she spins lives). . .

When he is going about his business properly, Beddoes is an economical writer in that he depends on verbs and strong verbal forms to do the heavy work: "I laid the lips of their two graves together, / And poured my brother into hers; while she, / Being the lightest, floated and ran over." The macabre intent of Isbrand, the repulsive nature of the deed, strike us with the greater force because of connotation, here largely clustered about the verbs and arising from the image of liquor. At other moments he will give us poetic passages that are gently descriptive.

> ZIBA: . . . For the drug, 'tis good:
> There is a little hairy, green-eyed snake,
> Of voice like to the woody nightingale,
> And ever singing pitifully sweet,
> That nestles in the barry bones of death,
> And is his dearest pet and playfellow.
> The honied froth about that serpent's tongue
> Deserves not so his habitation's name
> As does this liquor. That's the liquor for him.

or, direct and to the immediate point,

> DUKE: . . . Nature's polluted,
> There's man in every secret corner of her,
> Doing damned wicked deeds. . . .

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The thought of power can change Isbrand's expression "like sugar melting in a glass of poison". Again, "Never since Hell laughed at the church, blood-drunken / From rack and wheel, has there been joy so mad / As that which stings my marrow now." Isbrand's hour of triumph "will be all eternal heaven distilled / Down to one thick rich minute." In such moments of the play, Beddoes does not need to conform to the exigencies of a character he has created, since that character is general, not a "personality". Beddoes has left out of *Death's Jest-Book* much that modern readers want to find if they are to feel at home, for the play frankly explores other realities, taking risks of a sort we either do not approve or can not see.

Still, the failure (and it is a failure) of *Death's Jest-Book* derives not from the incomplete application of a technique, nor from a lack of talent, but from a spiritual malaise which, if nothing else, we share with Beddoes. We have a thousand writers who would worship "heroes of culture" with whom a failing artist may identify himself. The weaknesses and the pathos of these "heroes" are known, but many writers would prefer to be committed to the sins rather than to the literature, to the personality rather than the talent, for these are public and they pay off in fame, success. Pastiche, rather than eclecticism, determines such lives and works; we are closer to romantic *mal du siècle* than we like to think, for Hart Crane's alcohol-and-jazz Muse is easy of invocation, the nostalgics of Fitzgerald are less difficult to contrive and sustain than are the torments and passion of Dickens or Tennyson, for all their "sentimentality". We somehow want genius to be less upsetting, tidier: the American writer is so accustomed to keeping his tongue in his cheek that he has trouble talking, and he who risks a direct high tone finds the shortest shrift. Yet it may be that we are ready for another kind of writing, another way of observing. R. P. Blackmur has shown us some of the uses of parody, has indicated how such a tactic may point a way out of the slough modern literature has foundered in. We could use another route. Whether we accept the way of parody or not, we ought to like Beddoes; he was a man for our time a century too soon, and his work defines certain excesses we may commit, certain risks we can take, if we would wrench out of the bog.

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JOSEPH KERMAN

Verdi's *Otello*, or Shakespeare Explained

THERE IS THE WIDEST RANGE TO THE DEGREE of similarity that may exist between a work of art and its model, and the widest range to the usefulness of such relationships. Even with Shakespeare's *Othello* and the original *novella* by Girolamo Cintio there is some insight to be gained by viewing them together. With Verdi's *Otello* and the Shakespeare, the relationship is so close that it seems to me frankly inevitable to approach the opera by way of the play. Yet it is of the utmost importance to regard the opera (like the play, like the *novella*) as an independent work with an artistic integrity of its own. If only this can be borne in mind, comparison should set in convenient relief the particular techniques, intentions, and virtues of each. If not, perhaps the worst consequence is that every difference between the two will come to be interpreted as a matter of dramaturgy, a "necessity" occasioned by the change of mode from poetic to musical drama. Reasoning along these lines would be tempting. But *Otello* is much more than a mere translation; the changes from Shakespeare are as often as not determined by a basic difference in conception. Apparently it is easier to ignore this than to err in the other direction, and estimate Verdi's intention without taking account of the technical problems that confronted him. Ultimately of course the technique and the conception are inseparable; the mature artist conceives in terms of his own technical necessities. A distinction is nevertheless viable to a certain point for the critic.

The present essay in operatic analysis is equally concerned with differences of technique and differences of conception, and hopes to slight neither. In the first part to follow, the attempt is made to examine particularly the structure of Verdi's opera, always bearing in mind the dignity of his new conception of the Othello story. The intention is to clarify by contrast the methods of Verdi's dramatic art, the means by which he coordinated musical elements and musical entities to a larger, dramatic end (his own, not necessarily Shakespeare's). In the second part, the intention is to clarify Verdi's fundamental conception, as presented dramatically, again by means of contrast with Shakespeare. This is an approach to an understanding and evaluation of the opera, on what must be the most relevant level. It will appear that my own prejudice is rather for Shakespeare's treatment of this material; I shall suggest that Verdi's is obvious and also unsure, and that on this account the opera is ultimately not the masterpiece that many nowadays consider it to be. However, for those who find the play essentially a failure, the same juxtaposition and the same observed facts

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may reveal a peculiar cogency to the opera. The comparison should at all events provide them with, or I might say confront them with, a logical nineteenth-century alternative to Shakespeare's problematic tragedy.

I

The construction of a libretto based upon *Othello* called for all the shrewdness and flair of Arrigo Boito, the poet-composer who managed to persuade Verdi to undertake its composition. It is not hard to see, and it has been observed often enough, that two principles guided his modifications of the play, principles that were actually contradictory. Boito and Verdi were facing the problem that has occupied every serious opera composer since Gluck and Mozart: how to continue to exploit the powerful traditional conventions of musical drama, and at the same time progress towards the more "effective" and naturalistic treatment that their times demanded. Their first principle, therefore, was to condense an untidy plot into something striking for the audience of the well-made play. This was more superficial, and would never have occured to an Italian composer of the seventeenth century, who would have found Shakespeare altogether too classical for his episodic taste. But an Italian composer of any century would share Verdi and Boito's second idea: to crystallize emotional situations regularly into lyric sections or tableaux, in which music can take its own time and contribute most strongly and unequivocally to the dramatic whole. Certainly Verdi went to great pains to disguise the artificiality of what is usually called "number opera" (we might better call it "tableau opera"). But essentially this was his method, just as in his earlier works, however much it was now glossed over with naturalistic devices and safeguards. Though this is by no means the invariable method of opera, one is tempted to believe that it is the fundamental one. Situation by situation, Shakespeare was made to yield to this conception of the lyric stage.

Act I. Thus at the very start, the storm of Shakespeare's Act II, i, was strengthened out of all proportion for the opera's first tableau. No doubt it was a foregone conclusion that Verdi and Boito should have begun in Cyprus, as Dr. Johnson had prophesied:

> Had the scene opened in Cyprus, and the preceding incidents been occasionally related, there had been little wanting to a drama of the most exact and scrupulous regularity.

Verdi's initial chorus is the most thrilling *temporale* in Italian opera; the violence and terror at once strike the pitch characteristic of the opera throughout. Shakespeare, of course, "makes his storm out of poetry", but at the risk of displaying a musician's prejudice, I cannot find verse so evocative or convincing as music in mood-painting of this sort. The sense of pervasive disorder

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is thrust home to the emotions in musical terms, and when Otello appears, his triumph over the elements is magnificent. Verdi further scaled the storm to the drama by clearing it up first to firelight, and then to the cloudless night of the love-duet, which ends the act with the words "*Vien—Venere splende.*" It is true that one wonders a little what happens to the weather later in the work, for the very powerful ironic swing from storm to starlight is not resolved. Shakespeare's understated verse-tempest looks back on an intermission uneasy with thoughts of sea-travel, battles, and a father's curse, and it looks forward to Desdemona's anxiety. Both are missing from the libretto, which prefaces the action baldly with the storm, and reserves Desdemona rather carefully until after the drunken brawl.

Verdi's advantage is clearer still with the concluding love-duet, a lyric crystallization that was not directly indicated in Shakespeare, as the storm was. George Bernard Shaw has spoken for the musician's prejudice about musical and poetic love scenes:

> The poet tries to make words serve his purpose by arranging them musically, but is hampered by the certainty of becoming absurd if he does not make his musically arranged words mean something to the intellect as well as to the feeling. For example, the unfortunate Shakespeare could not make Juliet say:
>
> O Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, Romeo;
>
> and so on for twenty lines. He had to make her, in an extremity of unnaturalness, begin to argue the case in a sort of amatory legal fashion, thus: O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?
>
> Deny thy father and refuse thy name,
>
> Or, if thou wilt not, etc., etc., etc.
>
> It is verbally decorative; but it is not love.

Shaw had *Tristan* in mind, but the facts of the matter concern any poetic or musical dramatist, and both Shakespeare and Verdi knew how to make a virtue out of necessity. In Shakespeare the reticence of the relationship between Desdemona and Othello, revealed in actions and attitudes, is of the essence of the drama. In Verdi the immediacy, frankness, and intensity of their love, expressed in this supremely beautiful duet, is also of the essence—but of a different drama. Verdi could rely less than his operatic predecessors on the music alone. Writing a more naturalistic kind of play, he too had to see that words and actions "mean something to the intellect as well as to the feeling", and so a love scene on his emotional plane was a real problem; he could hardly represent the lovers, like Tristan and Isolde, in each other's arms. The revelation of their love could not take place at their first meeting after the storm, though Shakespeare was able to project this. The duet comes later, after Otello and then Desdemona have been roused from their bed by the brawl; an apt moment for reminiscences, and Boito has been admired for "occasionally relating" here something of the story of Othello's wooing, from Shakespeare's Venetian act.

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Thus the duet is closer in spirit to the dialogue between Tristan and Isolde after Mark's monologue than to those prior to his entrance, with a corresponding increase of light over heat. At the climax, as the lovers kiss, music surges up suddenly and for the first time in the orchestra, rather than from the singers themselves, who now have only broken phrases: "*Un bacio—*"; "*Otello!—*". It is at once as naturalistic as opera can be, and as intense as Verdi could be (and if there may be a faint whiff of *Redbook* or *McCall's* about the description, be sure that there is none about the passage itself). The music associated with the kiss, in the orchestra, recurs twice at the end of the opera as an all-important dramatic organization.

Act II. Acts II and III are Iago's. Shakespeare presents him obliquely, by means of his conversations with Roderigo, Emilia, Cassio, Othello, and Desdemona; Verdi follows him here, and characterizes Iago musically with great skill according to the mask that he presents to his partner in conversation. But when there are stronger means available, recitative and arioso cannot carry the primary force. Verdi's essential method is blunter; he sweeps together Shakespeare's four or five little soliloquies into a single great aria near the start of the act, Iago's "Credo". It is the most sensational number in the score, and rightly; the listener is jolted enough to sustain two acts of Iago's dissimulation to follow. There is none of Shakespeare's curiously inconclusive "motive-hunting" in Verdi's "Credo"; he gives us the villain direct, complete, and terrible. Now starts the tempting and goading of Otello, which is a less subtle and gradual process than in Shakespeare. Though Verdi had to compress the plot, he was also careful to dwell on certain of its emotional climaxes, and the result is a progress quite different from Shakespeare's, in spite of the ingenuity with which so much of the original dialogue is maintained. It may be useful to examine this part of the comparison in detail, for it shows well the nature of the gains and losses when Verdi's method is substituted for Shakespeare's.

The following will recall Shakespeare's arrangement in Act III, iii:

(1) Iago begins: "I like not that"; Othello pays no heed.

(2) Desdemona pleads for Cassio; Othello, delighted with her, will presently comply.

(3) Iago plants the suspicion. "I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits"; Othello is certainly taken aback.

(4) Yet when Desdemona enters: "If she be false, O, then heaven mocks itself! / I'll not believe't." Desdemona has no reason to be disturbed as yet. They leave after she drops the handkerchief.

(5) Emilia and Iago and the handkerchief; and very delicately an era passes while Desdemona and Othello are off-stage.

(6) Now only, Othello returns infuriated. What has he remembered? "Thou hast set me on the rack . . . Farewell the tranquil mind! . . . Othello's occupation's gone!" The attack on Iago, the proof of Cassio's dream, the vow of vengeance.

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Things go faster with Verdi, and ways have to be devised to take up the strain on the credibility. Before Desdemona pleads for Cassio at all, there is a scene which combines stages 1 and 3 of Shakespeare's Act III, iii; but although Otello actually has *less* cause now, he is considerably more than taken aback; he is already on the rack, ready for violence. It was then even more important for Verdi to brake the progress here (stage 4). However, it is not Desdemona who manages this, but instead Shakespeare's musicians of Act III, i, sea-changed into Cypriot sailors and peasants with *fanciulli* and mandolines, come at Cassio's bidding to serenade the mistress of the isle. Whereas in Shakespeare Othello's doubts could be quieted by the appearance of Desdemona, in Verdi he has gone further, and requires more appeasement; nothing less than a lyric interlude, in fact this serenade. Its function is made manifest by Otello himself: "*Quel canto mi conquide.*" The more ordinary thing would have been to have had Desdemona sing an aria or a canzonetta here; but what could this Desdemona have sung without sentimentality—after the love-duet, before the quartet? Verdi preferred to have the chorus symbolize her beauty and purity; their act of affection, and the sweetness and naivety of their song, characterize Desdemona as she could not have done herself. It is one of the most original things in the score.

Only now does Desdemona plead for Cassio; that puts a different complexion on the matter as compared to Shakespeare's subtler placement of this scene (as stage 2). No wonder Otello repulses her with un-Shakespearean violence when she offers to bind his head, and no wonder Desdemona now feels the sting so deeply as to sing a long grief-stricken melody—Shakespeare's inarticulate Desdemona! (compare the original: "I am very sorry that you are not well".) This melody is the basis of a rather old-fashioned quartet, which is essentially Desdemona's piece; Verdi will not leave her feelings to chance here, any more than in the expository first act. It is her sorrow that is crystallized in the passionate tune; meanwhile Otello mutters "Haply, for I am black . . ." (taken from Shakespeare's stage 3), and over on one side Emilia and Iago bicker over the handkerchief. An economy, this; but there was a reason for Shakespeare's ostensibly clumsy stagecraft with this fragment of his scene. After the women are sent off, Verdi stays close to the play. The act ends with the oath of vengeance, a carefully rounded, strophic duet, rousing, melodramatic, blustery—and once again, thoroughly appropriate; Otello, and Iago matched to him, ought to be "operatic" at this juncture, just as they are in Shakespeare. The music is all inflated metaphor and grandiloquent gesture, down to the last snarling chords.

And so in accordance with their two guiding principles for modifying the original play, Boito and Verdi recast this scene in order to have it move in hard, certain lines, and interjected a series of lyric interludes to stress its dramatic goals. In this respect Act II may be said to be the most conventionally

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operatic of the four. But one must realize that Verdi was manipulating his resources with the greatest refinement and awareness; with the possible exception of the quartet, the principal "numbers" of the act (the "Credo", the chorus and the duet) are set in place with a wholly fresh exploitation of their conventionality. Altogether there is too much quasi-historical apology for Verdi mixed in with current admiring attitudes towards him, not only with respect to *Otello,* but to such equally self-sufficient operas as *Il Trovatore* as well. These apologies are incidentally rarely backed by any real historical sense; they are simply remnants of the old Victorian disapproval of Italian opera (lumped together), which has only been hushed, not exorcised, by Verdi's popularity at Wagner's expense. Such fashions are always blind. The point is not that the baritone had to have an aria, or that there had to be a place in the second act for the salaried chorus, or that a "revenge duet" makes a lovely curtain. The point is how well Verdi knew how to employ those necessities dramatically. Iago's aria electrifies the action for two acts, and characterizes him so particularly that he can control the plot while others are in fact more articulate. The chorus gently represents Desdemona when she herself is much better silent. The duet reveals with terrible force the new hysteria of Otello and the hypocritical bombast of Iago.

Act III. The prelude is built out of a fragment of arioso with which Iago, suddenly confidential, unctuous, and most melodious, had warned his master of the green-eyed monster—"O beware, my lord . . .":

E un' idra fosca, livida,
cieca, col suo veleno
sè stessa attosca, vivida
piaga le squarcia il seno.

As the curtain rises and the prelude is due to end, it is interrupted by a rich quiet chord in the full brass, to which Titian hue a Herald announces the impending arrival of the Venetian ambassadors. But Otello has no mind for affairs of state, and as he dismisses the Herald the hydra-music calmly returns to fulfill its interrupted cadence; when he then turns to Iago and says *"Continua"*, the orchestra has already indicated their subject of conversation. It is a specifically musical, and I find a remarkably powerful projection of the mood of "continuation" which opens Shakespeare's fourth act; coming after an intermission during which Iago's poison has worked with frightful surety, and the symbolic enormity of the lost handkerchief has fully dawned on Othello. At this place, all that Verdi uses of Shakespeare's long scene (Act IV, i) is this initial mood, and the subsequent agreement on the eavesdropping on Cassio's talk of Bianca. It is not really time for Othello's fit, for although Iago has told him all about the handkerchief, Desdemona has not yet denied its loss. This she is about to do in the following long duet with Otello, in which

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Shakespeare's handkerchief and brothel scenes are merged (III, iv and IV, ii). To have had two separate scenes would have perhaps seemed clumsy in the nineteenth century. The compression gains smoothness and immediate power, but it loses something of Shakespeare's disjunct *crescendo* and the credibility that goes with it.

The duet is naturally less continuously lyrical than the love-duet of Act I, but Verdi does not neglect to incorporate a passionate arioso for Desdemona, "*Mi guarda!*", which again puts her feelings forward with un-Shakespearean completeness. As for Otello, he moves from forced civility to rage; this parallels a progress that we have already seen twice in Act II, and are to see twice more in this act, reaching a higher pitch each time and culminating in the epileptic fit. Otello now sinks into noble anguish, "*Dio, mi potevi scagliar*", but works himself up to a fury again; at the climax of his arioso he is spurred on by the sudden appearance of Iago announcing the presence of Cassio —a *coup de théâtre* which might seem objectionable if it were more organic. The eavesdropping trio, in which Otello's asides are rationalized, is one of the finest numbers of the score, with its joshing arpeggio theme of Cassio's laughter disembodied as words escape the eavesdropper, and then transformed on a fierce diminished-seventh as he recognizes the handkerchief in Cassio's hand. Surely also this is the plainest improvement over Shakespeare's more awkward arrangement. The advantage of opera over the spoken theatre in conveying simultaneous emotions has often been remarked; the quartet from *Rigoletto* is generally cited, but there are so many more beautiful examples in Mozart. Shakespeare might have wished for the operatic ensemble here, though most particularly perhaps in *Troilus and Cressida.*

From this point on the action is shadowed by the splendor of Venice, and with it the image of the "lion of St. Mark", the noble Moor. Trumpet fanfares are already ironic as the noble Moor plots Desdemona's murder to their accompaniment; the subsequent choral shouts of "*Evviva Otello*" are more profoundly so, recalling as they do Otello's first entrance after the storm, with news of his and Venice's victory. The coming of the ambassadors had been presaged (with the brass) at the beginning of the act, and the final humiliation of Desdemona, as Verdi arranged it, was to take place in their public view. But after Otello has insulted her in front of them, and ordered her to the ground, Verdi's Desdemona, instead of escaping, rises to the occasion with another long, explicit song of self-expression. In fact a huge ensemble in the old style, with seven soloists and two choruses, is constructed downwards from her superb lament.

This piece has been deprecated, but I find it admirably dramatic in this place. The very grandiosity of the score sets exactly the tone of vanity in the pageantry of Venice to mirror the transitory glory of the Lion, who is significantly silent. What is more it provides a wonderful backdrop for Iago, whose power has been growing steadily for two acts and who now seems to control the whole en-

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semble. He is the one *dynamic* singer; first he arranges for the various murders with Otello, then marches across the stage to give Roderigo his instructions. All this is under the spell of Desdemona's melody, which has added pathos in its subtle reminiscences of the love-duet of Act I; it was essential, in Verdi's scheme, for Desdemona to have her say. Though this blaze of sound would have made a rousing curtain, Boito passed it by for something better, and brought in Othello's fit now, at the climax of things—a better place for it than in Shakespeare. Iago, still in command, clears the stage as ironic cries of "*Gloria al Leon di Venezia*" from the unknowing crowd outside, sound around Otello's prostrate body. It is a suitably violent symbol of Otello's descent: the former man publicly celebrated as the noble general, while the present man is spurned beneath Iago's heel in literally insensate fury. "*Ecco il Leone!*", and the musical equivalent of the sickening jackass kick.

Act IV. This act is austere after the architectural third act. It is concerned not with Iago's intrigue and Otello's successive degradation, but with catastrophe. The first half of the act is effectively a monologue for Desdemona; it opens with the scene in her bedroom with Emilia (Shakespeare's Act IV, iii), pared down to the Willow Song and little else; then, as Emilia leaves, Verdi inserts a prayer for Desdemona to give Otello time to suppose that she has fallen asleep. The second half shows Otello: his melodramatic entrance *di una porta segreta,* the murder, Emilia's explanation, and the suicide. It is most significant that here, for once, Verdi takes relatively less emotional stock of his characters than Shakespeare does. Othello's great final speeches, in which he tries to summon up his old self, are omitted, and even the one arioso "*Niun mi tema*" is by comparison tentative in expression. The fact is that more and more orchestral organization is employed during Otello's part of this act. Instead of arias or large ariosi we have long sections of Verdi's quasi-recitative writing, more highly charged than usual with thematic reference and development. Several important motives are introduced during the pantomime which follows Otello's entry. However the major organizing force is the orchestral passage heard as Otello kisses the sleeping Desdemona, as in Shakespeare, and then heard once again at the very end:

> *I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee. No way but this—*
> *Killing myself to die upon a kiss.*

Verdi expanded this kiss into a major symbol; he had "planted" it with its music in Act I, at the climax of the love-duet, where it made an impression that three acts do not dim. And as in Verdi's conclusion neither Otello nor Lodovico speak of the past, it is this love-music that carries the full force of reference to the noble Otello who is fallen now. Verdi had often employed such recapitulated passages, but never so meaningfully or with so rich an effect of inevitability and consummation.

The musical recapitualtion, as a dramatic device, forces us to apprehend

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Act IV in terms of Act I; it forces us, suitably now, to stand back from this fairly close involvement and view the play in its largest sweep. One can, of course, get up much closer to the details, but not without the risk of losing perspective on the main lines of dramatic composition. I have not wished specially to ignore this detailed level, but I have wished to speak of first things first, and it is the "numbers" that support the drama first of all, in *Otello* as in *Il Trovatore*. Of course *Otello* is a very advanced kind of "number opera"; the dialogue and the movement between the "numbers" tend always to the lyric level of the arias and ensembles. This musical web cannot really be classed as recitative; we need some new name for it—it is always melodious, on the brink of arioso, always characteristic and intense in vocal inflexion, rich and striking in accompaniment. Indeed there is a grand recklessness in Verdi's distribution of musical ideas throughout this quasi-recitative, and the greatest ingenuity to his methods of shading in and out of the central lyric parts. But, once again, this must not deceive the listener into forgetting that it is these lyric parts that carry the primary force. And this force is not merely musical, or merely lyrical, or merely theatrical (though all of these), but in the fullest sense dramatic, in that music, lyricism and theatre are used to articulate themes and progresses, and, we should expect, a central binding action.

II

We may approach this central action, which projects Verdi's particular conception of the Othello story, by considering first the three main characters and then their interrelationship. The divergences from Shakespeare that now appear dwarf the differences in the dramatic arrangement which have been commented on above.

Iago, first of all, as has often been observed, was altered by Boito and Verdi from Shakespeare's very complicated human into Mephistopheles, that perennial operatic stand-by. Or else one can say that the Mephistophelian qualities which Goethe discerned in Iago have been magnified and almost everything else abandoned. As with all the characters in the opera, his talk and action is all beautifully characterized, but as usual our strongest impression of him comes from his "numbers", in particular his tremendous soliloquy. Though Iago's theology is somewhat muddled in the words of the "Credo", the music is unequivocal; and a characteristic Mephistophelian trait is that here he is *acting to the audience*, unlike Shakespeare's Iago, and unlike Verdi's Desdemona and Otello (in *"Dio mi potevi scagliar"*, for instance). There is an aura of the Black Mass about this soliloquy, with its blasphemous bravado, and minor corroboration is to be found in certain un-Shakespearean remarks elsewhere: *"Ti spinge il tuo dimone / e il tuo dimone son io"; "auita / Satana il mio cimento!"* Even before the "Credo", Iago's drinking-song recalls in tone the

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scene in Auerbach's cellar. Boito, author of the opera *Mephistophele*, originally meant to call the present libretto *Iago*. The simplification of Iago's personality actually relieved him of the whole vexatious matter of motivation.

Perhaps no nineteenth-century Italian could have been satisfied with innocent Desdemona, and her transformation must have been even more deliberate. Expanding her role meant changing her, especially when expansion meant making her more articulate. Thus of all Desdemona's music, only the Cypriot chorus, the Willow Song with some reservations, and the sentimental "Ave Maria" with many more, can be accommodated to Shakespeare's character; the love-duet, the quartet, the big ensemble, as well as striking details of recitative throughout, present someone radically new. The first shock is at her first appearance, in the love-duet of Act I. Here is Desdemona singing without any reserve on an equal plane with her Othello; they share and echo each other's phrase, music and sentiment. It was clever of Boito to have incorporated here some information about Othello's wooing; but it is very different to have Othello give this information to the Duke when accused of sorcery, and to have the husband and wife reminiscing about it intimately and sympathetically together. In fact one can scarcely credit the one remark of Iago's that tells us Verdi's couple are newly wed; as in Cintio's *novella*, which Verdi seems incidentally to have known something about, they must have been happily married for some time. Otello cannot be significantly older than his wife, though to be sure she is older than Shakespeare's girl; there has been nothing "unnatural" about the match; there is no reason for Otello to be black. As the opera continues, Desdemona becomes more and more mature, conscious, articulate, and (practically) indignant. Her complaints in Acts II and III are expressions of one who feels a hurt and faces it. In her discussions with Otello, there is a strong note of passion and resentment which may not be apparent from the libretto, with its deceptively close translation of Shakespeare's "is't possible? . . . is't true? . . . in sooth you are to blame . . . I understand a fury in your words . . . Alas, what ignorant sins have I committed?" and so on. But it is clear from the accent which music, doing the actor's work, provides to these exclamations. And there is at the end of the incomparable Willow Song that incomparably moving cry of "*Ah Emilia addio!*" from a person who lives through her emotions in style. Verdi's Desdemona is a creature of the colorful and not notably innocent Renaissance of Symonds, de Sanctis, and d'Annunzio; she is as capable of adultery as she is of passion in the grand manner. Her religiosity, true to this conception, is constant but superficial. And La Tosca is peeping out from under her petticoats.

Meanwhile the expansion of her role led, and this perhaps less deliberately, to a cutting-down of Othello. I have indicated how the structure of Act III depicts the noble general come low, but over the four acts this is not so convincing, in the absence of so many of Shakespeare's safeguards. Verdi gave

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up the Venetian act, in which Shakespeare solidly grounded the personality of his tragic hero. He abandoned the pedestal on which Shakespeare's Desdemona places her Othello. And most critically at the end he sacrificed the tragedy of Othello for the pathos of Desdemona; so much attention is directed towards her, that at this crucial juncture Otello cannot be allowed to recall his former self in any capacity save as a lover. Of this we are indeed strongly reminded; the final recapitulation of the music for this kiss is the most eloquent passage in the whole opera. But this music is as much Desdemona's as Otello's, and in the great wave of pity for her we are left in doubt about our man. The grave postscript of Lodovico is missed here, as are also any other echoes of the state. It may also be remarked that in the opera Otello seems so volatile that possibly his hysteria cannot cause the audience too much surprise or distress. From the time that he quiets the brawl with Cassio and Roderigo, one is uneasy about his temper; Shakespeare's

Now by heaven,
My blood begins my safer guides to rule

may be a portent, but Verdi takes it as a stage direction and writes it in the music. At his entrance in the last act, Otello is unresolved on any course of action, and the celebrated orchestral passage well represents his fretful instability. True, Othello is the most emotional of Shakespeare's tragic protagonists. He is also the most emotional of Verdi's tenors, in his least artificial opera, and that is too much.

Put all this together, and it appears that Verdi has written a drama of love and jealousy that glances forward to the *verismo* theatre as surely as it peers back to the Elizabethan. The central binding action seems in the end obscure. Verdi's instinct was to transfer more and more of the play to Desdemona, and fitfully she was made to occupy the center of things at Iago's and especially at Othello's expense. But in this Verdi was actually hindered by his close reliance on Shakespeare. Desdemona's actions, or rather her lack of actions, no longer match the person whose maturity and spirit are set forth by the musical expression. Especially in the murder scene we have an anachronistically Shakespearean Desdemona; the notable rhythm of her growth in adversity is arrested here. For that matter, Otello in his Shakespearean role as "executioner" in this scene is also psychologically askew, for Verdi weakens the record of his tragic fall, both before and after. And if we cannot believe unflinchingly in Othello's greatness the relevance of the drama becomes problematic; Desdemona's relationship to Othello becomes more trivial, and Iago's virtuosity loses its terrible force. Yet Verdi's Iago is ostensibly the fiend himself. Faust was fair game, but even poor Tom Rakewell seems more worthy of his attentions than this Othello.

This uncertainty, I would suppose, came as a result of what was perhaps

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Verdi's deepest instinct of all: to make something more understandable and naturalistic than Shakespeare's cryptic tragedy. Like many critics, Verdi seems to have wished to harmonize the irrationalities in the play. No other Shakespeare tragedy can show so lively a critical history, in the range of repulsion, attraction, perplexity, and exasperation that has been recorded over its web of conflicting meanings. But all critics, excepting the most exasperated, admit the deep center of truth that Shakespeare has touched and half released. The motivations of evil, the tragic contradictions latent in nobility, the ambiguity of innocence, the cruelty of accident—it is hard to know where we can sense these more profoundly than in *Othello*. But Verdi's opera presents no such insights, raises no such drastic and gruesome questions, and causes no such thrilling strain on the artistic imagination. Otello and Desdemona are persons of rather ordinary sensibility; another broken marriage—broken by an inflexible fate which is dramatically coarse and at the same time reassuring. Boito was careful to explain, in his last few lines, the etymology of Des-demona, Shakespeare's "ill-starr'd wench":

Pia creatura nata sotto maligna stella.

It is the evil star and the fallen angel that cause havoc in the love-nest of Otello and Desdemona. Verdi has written the play to appease (yes, and to vindicate) Thomas Rymer and his friends, the "credible" *Othello*. Motives are brought to the surface, and sympathies are clearly directed. The central action has been aereated as thoroughly as the foul imagery of Iago, the jibes of Othello in the brothel scene, and even one innocent line of the Willow Song.

A credible, decorous, rationalized *Othello*. Now of course, to distrust the central conception of the piece is not to gainsay its force and beauty, and its quite dazzling imaginativeness. Nor is it to imply that opera as a genre lacks the ultimate sublimity possible to the spoken theatre, as though universal principles about the musical and poetic modes of drama were to be generalized from the practice of two men. Opera of this sort deals in one sense in simplicities, but simplicity is not incompatible with great drama; the musical stage has its share of dramatists whose central vision has been steady and profound, and whose technique, maybe rough, has been sufficient to it. We have *Orfeo*, *Fidelio*, *Tristan*, *Boris*, *Pelléas*, and the *Magic Flute*. With *Otello* it is the dramaturgy that is so powerful and rich, and so brilliant that it is doubly hard to suppose that mere technical problems caused the crucial divergencies from Shakespeare. The central conception of the opera was Verdi's own, determined by his personality, his milieu, and his idea of the theatre. Weak or strong, *Otello* is a work in its own right, neither to be hampered nor bolstered by Shakespeare's play. It has its dramatic responsibilities along with its independence.

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THOMAS BARBOUR

Theatre Chronicle

No one can complain that, in the season just past, our stage has been cluttered with "classic" revivals. Apart from the foreign-language productions brought us by visitors from Greece and France, only three have been offered: Shaw's *Misalliance* and Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Though the first proved successful enough at the box-office to be held over, the other two were packed off after a fortnight's limited engagement apiece. Broadway remains virtually innocent of any connection with a dramatic tradition expressing an occasional concern for art as well as commerce. We have survived another season with little cause to fear that the entrepreneurs of our stages may have shown any grave disposition to go the way of their counterparts in our art museums (who have unblushingly hung the like of Titian and Rembrandt), or in our concert halls and opera houses (who have dared to make public the music of a Wagner or a Mozart), or in certain of our publishing concerns (who have seen no sin in maintaining a generous stock of classic reprints). The secret of our theatre's past rests largely unrevealed by any other than ineffective, collegiate amateurs; surely nothing like the Théâtre Français or London's Old Vic has seriously threatened the immaculate philistinism of the New York stage.

Yet we had something of a scare. The New York City Center had just declared that it was financially incapable this season of presenting its customary drama program, when somehow the funds were found, the announcement was rescinded, and a bright young man, Albert Marre, was brought down from Cambridge, Massachusetts, to be master of the revels. The City Center had already proved its agreeable capacity to present opera and ballet tastefully in repertory; and it had given occasional evidence that it could sponsor worthwhile productions of classic drama, though no attempt was made to organize these on a similar continuing basis—an ideal to which Mr. Marre is reported to subscribe. Mr. Marre, on the other hand, came to New York from some years' participation in the destiny of the Brattle Theatre, an organization that was at least once referred to as "the American Old Vic". If its staff had neither quite the talent nor, above all, the maturity to justify such a comparison, still its management showed a similar devotion to an exceptional standard with a selection of plays unsurpassed by any other American theatre group of recent memory. The combination of Brattle and the City Center looked like possibly a good thing for those who palaver about the cultural aspects of the theatre. For the rest of us it was rather a shock; but, on the evidence of the three productions mentioned, the alarm was hardly necessary. Every precaution was taken that the dismaying "classic" character of the selected plays would be

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almost unrecognizably disguised, and the slick standard of Broadway illiteracy was as cheerfully followed as each occasion permitted.

In the case of *Misalliance* there is far less of a discrepancy than in the Shakespearean pieces between the demands of the play itself and the alleged demands of our entertainment industry. Like *The Millionairess* (presented for the first time here earlier in the season), the play is one of those Shavian rarities for which a reasonably good audience can be assured in view of the continuing curiosity about a much-publicized author, to whom death has only lately attracted the special attention of the press. It is undeniably amusing; it presents a situation still sufficiently "modern" to make the appeal of familiarity and a language that is still good English without yet being quite archaic; above all, it teases the intellect without taxing it to any consequential degree. As a result of this fortunate coincidence of Shaw's and Show Business's objectives, the production of *Misalliance* was, by either standard, easily the most satisfying of the three. Its director was spared the necessity of finding a "gimmick" to make the play palatable; the play being in a sense its own gimmick, he had only to make the most of it.

Misalliance is structurally even less carefully wrought than *The Millionairess*, but verbally it is more brilliant. Not only every reviewer, but Shaw himself (in the character of Hypatia Tarleton) has been prompt to point out that it is nothing more than talk; but the talk is entirely agreeable to the extent that the play-goer is willing to forego watching a play in favor of over-hearing a conversation. (For my part, my attention managed not to wander for two acts out of the three.) While the spoken play aspires to high comedy, its visual aspects rarely rise above the level of farce. For Shaw this is uncomfortable ground, especially where he has provided no plot to speak of to give his antics some semblance of order. As a farceur he can be, embarrassingly, merely puckish. The representation of a young nobleman writhing on the floor in a temper tantrum, or an underwear manufacturer tussling with a Polish aviatrix, or a nervous would-be assassin cowering in a steam cabinet seems as strained—and consequently as unfunny—as the action of *Room Service* would be if it illustrated a libretto by Oscar Wilde.

The director's assignment here would seem to be to have his actors speak the speeches "trippingly on the tongue" with all the clarity and brightness at their disposal and, meanwhile, perform the necessary acrobatics with as much grace as Shaw's stage directions will allow them. Mr. Marre had the happy inspiration to hire Cyril Ritchard for the job, and the problem was, on the whole, admirably taken care of. Mr. Ritchard is himself an accomplished stylish actor, evidently blessed with the ability to communicate the secret of his own technical competence to other players. His charges performed with just the right sort of meticulous gusto and made of *Misalliance* the only valid example of a stylish production seen hereabouts since the departure of the Barrault company. It was furthermore remarkable that the cast, of which five

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out of eight supposed Englishmen were actually of American origin, achieved a very pleasing air of homogeneity without the strain that too many American actors put themselves to, trying to sound British and producing a noise heard nowhere east of a Manhattan dramatic academy.

Mr. Marre, as the director himself of *Love's Labour's Lost,* decided to set his play in England at the turn of this century, thereby provoking a deal of both catcalls and compliments, most of which, in either case, seemed to ignore the real critical issue. There are plenty of precedents for setting Shakespeare in all sorts of periods, and only relatively recent practice favors the time actually indicated by the action of the play. The choice for *Love's Labour's Lost* did not strike me as at all, in itself, objectionable. The Edwardian fête-champêtre is at once as remote as an Elizabethan revel and as familiar as last Sunday's picnic; the device might have served to give a sense of meaningful immediacy yet with no sacrifice of artistic distance. But a device is not a production, and final judgment must take account of the reason why it was chosen and the use to which it is put. In other words, did Mr. Marre use his gimmick to illuminate the play or, in some fashion, to compensate for it?

The evidence as presented at the City Center would indicate the latter. One might wonder whether he had not simply conferred with his capable designer (Robert O'Hearn) and costumer (Robert Fletcher); set a few bits of business involving an ancient automobile, a gramophone, and a game of croquet; and then walked off the rehearsal stage, leaving his actors to fend thereafter for themselves. If Mr. Marre really attempted to concert their performances into any kind of unity, he surely tackled a job so far beyond his powers that it would be kinder to him to believe he made no such attempt at all. Most of the cast were never more than a third of the time intelligible; but even this majority disposition did not make for unanimity, for Joseph Schildkraut, Paul Ballantyne, and Earl Montgomery successfully insisted upon being at all times understood—and enjoyed.

Mr. Schildkraut went further and gave a performance of Don Adriano de Armado that showed much devotion to the spirit of the play—and perhaps no little of the same to Joseph Schildkraut—, playing the fantastical Spaniard appropriately enough with melancholy languor, though scorning to add another, more vigorous dimension to the part with a suggestion of Don Adriano's spiritual kinship to Scaramouche. Even without his exploiting the possibility of an element of bombast, his interpretation was a pleasure to see and to hear, but it was always a solo performance. Mr. Schildkraut refused to relate himself consistently to his fellow players (wisely perhaps, since otherwise he would have had to sacrifice much of his own integrity), and surely there was nothing Edwardian about him. His particular method of accommodating his performance to Mr. Marre's conception was, quite simply, to ignore it. He moved in a world of his own (was it not Viennese as much as anything else?), and there was no indication of the director's taking any pains to make him toe the line.

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At another level were Philip Bourneuf (Holofernes) and Hurd Hatfield (Sir Nathaniel), who fell right in with the Edwardian conceit, playing amiable caricatures of a fusty schoolmaster and a vapid country parson. Upon their first appearance, riding bicycles and expertly disguised with grease-paint and crêpe hair, they immediately engaged each other in a croquet match, one of Mr. Marre's most delightful inventions. They made of it a very amusing turn indeed, and their director, as was the audience, must have been well pleased. But anyone in the least concerned about the play might be permitted to object that Mr. Hatfield's comically agitated mode of utterance and Mr. Bourneuf's equally comic growlings through a vast moustache into an interminable woolen muffler efficiently served to make the words that counterpointed this bit of business entirely incomprehensible. The gimmick in this instance was hardly illuminating.

On a lower level still—the lowest conceivable, I fear—came Kevin McCarthy, whom Mr. Marre, in what must have been a moment of extraordinary dementia, cast in the all-important role of Berowne. It is too easy and not altogether fair to berate Mr. McCarthy for his undeniably bad performance; in these hard-pressed times for the theatre, an actor is not to be blamed for taking whatever job is offered to him, however unsuited to it he is. It was rather his director's fault for not realizing that a handsome appearance and a reputable characterization of Biff in the film version of *Death of a Salesman,* while possibly attractions at the box-office, are not sufficient qualifications for the player of Berowne; or, I wonder, did Mr. Marre really care? The fact remains that this Berowne was neither Edwardian, Elizabethan, nor Navarrois, but something more like a clean-cut, American college boy, who had got himself involved in an odd sort of houseparty, where peculiar people wore peculiar clothes and said peculiar things and expected him to do the same. Good manners persuaded him to go along with them, but could not completely conceal his embarrassment at and, at bottom, contempt for their shenanigans. Such behavior is a far cry from making for any satisfactory Berowne, who is one of the first of a charming type (Benedick and Mercutio are others) that appears with some frequency in Shakespeare's earlier plays: the sophisticated stripling, wise enough to know his own folly, yet young enough still to enjoy it thoroughly. Mr. McCarthy offered neither wisdom nor enjoyment.

(I might divert here for a moment to the problem of Shakespeare and the American accent, since the performance in question is pertinent evidence in the case. In spite of transatlantic objections, there is no very good reason why the so-called American accent cannot serve for the expressive delivery of the Shakespearean line, provided that it does not too horrendously assault the ear; in fact, our accent is probably at least as close to Shakespeare's own as is that heard currently on the London stage. Now, as far as what is strictly meant by "accent" is concerned, Mr. McCarthy's voice, while weakly projected, might have been quite satisfactory, but it was marred by a trait, too typically American and fully justifying British criticism: a thoroughly slovenly ennunciation,

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which helped to make hearing him difficult and listening to him, when successful, no pleasure.)

The faults of Mr. Marre's production, its lack of unity and the show of indifference to problems of technique, might have gone a long way toward being rectified if it had occurred to him to bring to the play the same attentiveness to style that marked the production of *Misalliance*. On the surface it is a little surprising that such was not the case; for *Love's Labour's Lost* is also, in its way, an exercise in talk, an effervescent kind of talk that bubbles into couplets and quatrains, more than in any other of Shakespeare's plays, and makes outrageous sport of the then new-found and apparently illimitable possibilities of the English language. It might just be that, properly handled, this good-natured, Euphuistic gambol could still supply nearly as much pleasure as must have greeted its first performance; but evidently Mr. Marre could see nothing in it beyond its purely pictorial possibilities. Was it ignorance or a kind of fear that prevented his going farther? Or must one conclude—and I'm afraid one must—that he just does not care very much for *Love's Labour's Lost?*

George Jean Nathan, a critic of some acute perception and many irascible prejudices, would agree with him if this conclusion is correct; his tribute to Albert Marre in a recent issue of *Theatre Arts*[1] deserves quoting in part. "That the play is one of Shakespeare's poorest," he says, "is well enough known, and that it needs all kinds of production and acting fillips to make it tolerable in these days should be equally recognized. . . . Marre's avoidance or at least minimizing of the accepted classical acting style and classical reading of the Shakespeare line . . . is also to his credit, since, . . . much of the play does not, save traditionally and unwarrantedly, call for any such acting and reading." Even if it were conceded that Mr. Nathan is right in his presumption that a "classical acting style" is no longer warranted by *Love's Labour's Lost,* it is difficult to condone his approval of the absence from the production of any consideration of style, classical or otherwise, at all. It might be easier for me if I could agree that this is "one of Shakespeare's poorest" plays (a formidably large category, if one goes by most reviewers of Shakespearean revivals in recent years). I will allow that it is perhaps a minor play, but it happens also to be a particular favorite of mine. I may be as crotchety after my fashion as Mr. Nathan or Mr. Marre, and I am disinclined to try to convert them to my opinion of the piece's merits; the obvious point, however, that should be made is that, if a director has so low an opinion of a play that he will encourage or even tolerate the utter obscuration of its text, he should not, in all fairness to himself, the play, and his audience, undertake the direction of it. Broadway, I repeat, need never fear the corruption of its own peculiar standard as long as one who shares its horror of classical revivals is entrusted with their management.

Mr. Marre was also nominally the director of *The Merchant of Venice,* but

[1] *Theatre Arts,* April, 1953. p. 27.

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the impression one took from it must probably be chargeable mostly to the efforts of Luther Adler, who has now realized one of his long ambitions and followed in his father's footsteps as Shylock. The question here was not so much one of the lack of style as of the elaboration of a very definite style, used, however, with the clearly deliberate intention of perverting the play. Mr. Adler is a great actor of a certain kind; he is a professional in the very best sense of the word, well trained, always in full knowledge and complete control of what he is doing on the stage, and always, as the French say, "sérieux". In these respects, his performance was a joy to watch, but his method—out of the Group Theatre, by Stanislavski and the Yiddish Art—, while admirably suited to his particular conception of his role, seemed wholly out of keeping with the intended spirit of *The Merchant of Venice*. He played Shylock very much for sympathy, yet he managed to eschew all, or most, of the sentimentality, the writhings and mealy-mouthed whinings that too often go with such a portrayal. It is worth describing in some detail just what effect he seemed to be after and how he went about achieving it.

His Shylock was intelligent, cultivated, and mature. He cut a handsome figure indeed, dressed neither raggedly nor garishly, according to either of the more usual conventions, but in sombre and dignified elegance. He walked erect and slowly, gestured unselfconsciously with a casual grace and never over-much, except in rare moments when his equilibrium was temporarily and understandably upset. His devotion to his daughter was profound but undemonstrative, as was his attachment to Tubal, to whom he was bound, hardly intellectually, but emotionally by the deep, unutterable ties of their common religious loyalty. Altogether he was a most admirable, if rather chilly, fellow.

The attitude of this Shylock toward Antonio, Bassanio, and their friends may best be described as contemptuous. There was hatred in it, yes, but not the kind of hate that dignifies its object as an enemy worth being feared, rather that which recognizes him as an inferior, potentially dangerous, but actually not to be taken too seriously. His macabre contract with the merchant was clearly meant in the spirit of "a merry sport", just as he said it was, although the jest was no sign of a great capacity for humor on Shylock's part. His intention was maintained until the concurrence of his discovery of Jessica's flight and his subjection to a particularly exasperating show of Jew-baiting; the tone of the speech beginning, "To bait fish withal," was more than half serious, but its violence was excusable in view of his exceptional distress at the moment, seeking release by making Antonio his whipping boy. By the time he was ready to exact the bond, however, he had cooled down considerably; and Mr. Adler's deportment in the courtroom served to enforce the impression that Shylock, though determined to pursue his jest to the very limit of innocence, meant no more than to throw a scare into his persecutors and never actually to carry his threat to a fatal conclusion. Throughout the trial, he kept up an air of amused detachment, smiling condescendingly at Antonio's slow-witted stoicism and his associates' naive alarm, complimenting Portia-Balthazar

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("O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!") in the same patronizing and sarcastic vein. He approached Antonio, presumably to cut out his pound of flesh, in a long, slow cross, taking the full stage left to right, plainly relishing the panic calculated by his delay; and, having reached him, he held out his hand, palm outward and fingers extended down, in a gesture that made no sense if it was not intended as a signal of reprieve. Antonio uncharitably spat into the forgiving hand. Shylock, crying out in disgust, might have been ready then to draw out his knife impulsively and execute his contract after all, but he was too late; Portia had already swiftly interposed, "Tarry a little: there is something else."

If he was somewhat disconcerted by the court's sentence, he must have been mainly relieved that his emotions were not permitted to get the better of his good sense; the jest remained a jest. As for his penalties, they were not so bad as they might have been. The credulous Tubal rushed to his comfort at the dread injunction that "he presently become a Christian"; but Shylock, not overly dismayed, whispered some consolation in his companion's ear and dispatched him upon some urgent matter. Just what this secret business was, the audience never knew; but it was reasonable to conclude that Shylock had a plan to mitigate the harshness of his sentence. He was too good, too intelligent a man to be bested by these Christian fools. As he left the court, he laughed in his chief taunter's face; it was a raucous, rather vulgar laugh, quite out of keeping with Shylock's established character, and Mr. Adler's only lapse from taste.

The characterization was, in every respect but this parting shot, remarkably consistent and well controlled. One might observe, however, that it is not supported by every one of Shakespeare's lines, and Mr. Adler's way around the belying speeches deserves some notice. They might have been cut from the text, but most were not; Mr. Adler managed more cunningly to suppress them. He is a master in the art of throwing away a line, a deliberate technique of de-emphasis, never to be confounded with mere sloppiness of diction in the manner, say, of a Kevin McCarthy. Examples of it could be found throughout his performance, but none more striking than in the conversation with Tubal, Act III, scene 1 ("Why there, there, there! A diamond gone," etc.). It is difficult to gain sympathy with a remark like, "I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear!"; but Mr. Adler managed to convey the sense that his concern was primarily paternal and not really mercenary by delivering the contradictory sentiments at a fast clip and in a calculatedly unintelligible mumble. They became the distracted aberrations of a mind, sorely distressed, that fixes upon a small loss in a desperate attempt to avoid confrontation with a greater one. By contrast, his reaction to the news of Jessica's exchange of her ring for a pet monkey ("I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.") was slowly paced and voiced with singing clarity and touching pathos; in the audi-

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ence, there were damp eyes and lumps in throats, just as Mr. Adler intended there should be.

The device of purposely slighting lines in their projection may be occasionally compatible with the intentions of a naturalistic playwright, inasmuch as it is a common enough idiosyncrasy of natural speech to express an attitude more through the tone of utterance than by the words actually spoken; but it is highly debatable that Shakespeare expected so realistic an approach to *The Merchant of Venice* and questionable indeed that he ever wrote a word believing that no one would hear it. Even so, Mr. Adler's unconventional delivery might have been more excusable if the character he created by it did not put every other character in the play in a very difficult position. The villainy shed from Shylock became the portion of the rest of the cast, and they in turn, to accommodate it, had to suppress whatever not inconsiderable attractiveness the playwright had provided for them. Thus Antonio, rather than a generous and loyal friend, became something of a hypocrite and more of a dullard than ever; Bassanio from a youthful and appealing lover was converted into a childish, irresponsible boob; and Gratiano was changed from a witty man-about-town into an extraordinarily foul-mouthed and evil-minded proto-Nazi. Jessica fetched up as an ungrateful hussy; and Portia—worst fate of all—turned out to be a silly young woman with wholly unwarranted intellectual pretentions. With characters like these, *The Merchant of Venice* was transformed from a light-hearted comedy into an angry sociological treatise; the dark coloring of the set in the Venetian scenes, the dim lighting, and the musical accompaniment in a bitter minor mode helped to complete this gloomy impression. In view of the transformation, the final scene seemed an anomaly: the lights came up to reveal, now that Shylock was out of the picture, a very charming group of people engaged in the pretty by-play of the rings. One could only regret that their acquaintance could not have been made earlier.

Messrs. Marre and Adler undoubtedly felt impelled to alter their play so drastically, not because of personal petulance (as may have been the case with *Love's Labour's Lost*), but out of what may be a valid, extra-theatrical consideration. It is hard to see how full justice can be done to the comedy without confessing that Shylock is the villain and, moreover, that the bedrock of his villainy is not his avarice, his usury, or any other such symptom of it, but rather his Jewishness. The fact must be faced that it is, if not an anti-semitic, at least an anti-Judaist play. The speeches that seem to indicate sympathy for Shylock have misled too many people. Before one becomes too convinced by Shylock's protestations of purity, it would be worthwhile to observe that Antonio is not at all impressed by his remarks, which he puts down merely to the devil's citing scripture. When Shylock complains, "You called me dog," Antonio is prompt and frank to admit, "I am as like to call thee so again." His own virtue does not, and should not, extend to a tolerance of what he recognizes as unmitigated viciousness.

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This equation of the Jew and evil is a hard one for us to take; the only way to appreciate it is to give consent to a myth that was still operative in Shakespeare's time, though it was then almost due for extensive reconsideration. This myth proceeded from the grim logic of the mediaeval mind, which, assuming the exclusive identification of the good life and the Christian life, was obliged to recognize that nothing good could come from Jewry, especially since the Jews were not only non-Christian but, as the executioners of Christ, most positively anti-Christian.[2] Having rejected the greatest good, they were figured as having embraced the greatest evil; and so Chaucer's prioress speaks of "our first fo, the serpent Sathanas, / That hath in Jewes herte his waspes nest." If her point of view is acknowledged, then Antonio had every right to spit upon Shylock. He had at least as much right as Hansel and Gretel had to push the witch into the oven; for Shylock, when the myth is accepted, is nothing more nor less than the bogeyman (though he would be a more convincing one if Shakespeare had suspended his talent for humanization here and had treated him more in the hyperbolic manner of Marlowe's Barabas—or even Dickens' Fagin). Antonio is then his virtuous opposite, now fully deserving the title role in the play; and *The Merchant of Venice* turns out to be what it must have been meant to be, that is, a fairy tale.

Among reasonably civilized people such a myth can work only as long as it is not confronted with reality; and it must be remembered that probably very few in Shakespeare's audience had ever seen a Jew, for Jews were outlawed from England by a decree of 1290. They did not return in any significant numbers until Cromwellian times, and our experience since then has taught us that we can no longer accommodate our standards of civilization to the practical acceptance of the myth. This means that we can no longer be delighted by Shakespeare's fairy tale as children that still believe in the bogeyman. Whether we can enjoy the play with adult detachment, accepting the myth in a fictive sense by a willing suspension of disbelief, may largely depend upon how much we can divorce fiction from reality; and the awful reality of Dachau and Buchenwald may not yet be a thing to put too easily out of mind. Perhaps when the fear of anti-semitism can be confidently dismissed, *The Merchant of Venice* may be accepted comfortably in its proper version. The version at the City Center, meanwhile, seemed designed merely to capitalize upon that fear and never to dispel it. It was an interesting essay in the actor's art, but it was an unpleasant play, in name only *The Merchant of Venice*. Again, Broadway had no cause for alarm.

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[2]The Hitlerian racial myth would be abominable to this way of thinking; for was not Christ himself of the Jewish race? So Jessica is made altogether acceptable by her willingness to become a Christian.

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ROBERT FITZGERALD

The Muse Re-Seated

CREATIVE INTUITION IN ART AND POETRY, by *Jacques Maritain.* Bollingen Series XXXV, 1. Pantheon Books. $6.50.

IN THIS HANDSOME BOOK THERE ARE nine long chapters, sixty-eight plates, and an anthology of one hundred seventy-five "texts without comment", or literary illustrations, most of them in French and English but some in Latin and a few in Italian. The printing is large and clear, the margins are wide, and the mass of the volume is noble but not oppressive. I discover only one typographical error. In this case all the advantages of good publishing and printing craft are bestowed where they belong—on a work beautiful in itself and of high and permanent intellectual value. The author regards it as "a kind of joint tribute to British and American and to French poetry" of recent times. In the apologetics of that poetry, I don't know of any document as deeply illuminating as this, and I intend to consider it here at some length.

"By Art," Maritain begins, "I mean the creative or producing, work-making activity of the human mind. By Poetry I mean, not the particular art which consists in writing verses, but a process both more general and more primary, that inter-communication between the inner being of things and the inner being of the human Self which is a kind of divination . . . Poetry, in this sense, is the secret life of each and all of the arts; another name for what Plato called *mousikê.*"

Concerning poetry so understood neither literary criticism nor appreciation in the other arts can formulate a general theory; that is clearly the province of philosophy alone. Maritain's theory will stand or fall with the philosophy of which it is a part and a late and long meditated example. Persons interested in the arts either as executants or otherwise may learn from this book some of the qualities of that philosophy—its grandeur of intellectual foundation and its sensitivity in following the contours of the real. As a systematic treatise in the philosophy of art the book is less comprehensive, in a territorial sense, than Susanne Langer's recent and brilliant *Feeling and Form.* But it is, I think, corroborative of Mrs. Langer's thought in general, and it goes further than she or anyone else does into the arcana of the creative process.

It is characteristic of the author to remark on the ghostliness of the philosophical terms he has to use: "I need to designate both the singularity and the infinite internal depths of this flesh-and-blood and spiritual existent, the artist; and I have only an abstract word: the Self. I need to designate the secretive

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depths and the implacable advance of that infinite host of beings, aspects, events, physical and moral tangles of horror and beauty—of that world, that indecipherable Other—with which Man the artist is faced; and I have no word for that except the poorest and tritest word of the human language; I shall say: the things of the world, the Things. But I would wish to invest this empty word with the feelings of primitive man looking at the all-pervading force of Nature, or of the old Ionian philosophers saying that 'all things are full of gods.' "

I. In Chapter One the visual arts of the Orient and the West are examined in their shifting relationships to the two master terms and in the different sense in which both have been in varying degrees religious. The whole development of our own painting is summed up accurately in a single sentence: "Western art passed from a sense of the human Self first grasped as object, and in the sacred example of Christ's divine Self, to a sense of the human Self finally grasped as subject, or in the creative subjectivity of man himself, man the artist or the poet." The neo-classicism which intervened and fought this development, repressing the subjectivity, stifling the "sense of the Sign", Maritain does not hesitate to call corrupted. At the same time he insists that the great modern painters have been men more intent than ever on Nature, men who seeking after themselves are carried beyond the natural appearances of things in search of deeper reality. Like the forerunners, Piero della Francesca and Hieronymus Bosch, and the great witness, Cézanne, the true modern artist "grasps enigmatically an aspect of the mystery of the universe of matter, in so far as this aspect or element is meant to fructify into a construction of lines or colors. What is thus looked for in visible things must have the same kind of inner depth and inexhaustible potentialities for revelation as the self of the painter. As a result, modern painting at its best attains . . . to a sort of ontological vastness . . ."

Maritain concludes that as Oriental art, intent on Things, revealed nevertheless the creative subjectivity of the artist, so modern Western art, intent on the Self, has revealed hidden aspects of Things; and he infers that "at the root of the creative act there must be a quite particular intellectual process, without parallel in logical reason, through which Things and the Self are grasped together by means of a kind of experience or knowledge which has no conceptual expression and is expressed only in the artist's work. . . ."

II. As to the artist's work, there are some fundamentals to remember. In Chapter Two the writer, remarking that *homo poeta* is carried on the shoulders of *homo faber,* distinguishes as Aristotle did between the speculative and the practical activities of the intellect and reminds us that art, all art including that of the carpenter, belongs to the sphere of practice and is "intellectual by nature, as the odor of the rose pertains to the rose. . . ." And he recalls also the distinction within the practical between *factibilia* and *agibilia,* things to be made and things to be done, and the principle, consequent upon this distinction, that art is concerned with the good of the work, not with the good of

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Man. It "breaks into human life and human affairs like a moon prince or a mermaid into a custom office or a congregation; it will always make trouble and arouse suspicion. But art exists in a human being—the artist. As a result, though the fact of a man's being a poisoner is nothing against his prose [a remark of Oscar Wilde's], the fact of a man's being a drug addict can be, in the long run, something harmful to his prose. . . . Once a man is through, his art is through also."

What are we to understand by the "rules" of art? Imagine the first boat ever invented; in that case the only rule was to make something on which to cross the river. For the second boat there were already two rules: the first one and another, the newborn rule of making a raft. For the third there were three: the first two and the newborn rule of improving on previous work. The primary obligation remained, and would always remain, to rule number one. But "even in the useful arts, the rules are not ready-made recipes, taught by professors in schools and museums, but vital ways of operating discovered by the creative eyes of the intellect in its very labor of invention." And this is all the more true in the fine arts.

With respect to these, Maritain returns to Plato and the Symposium for a statement that he will amplify and modify later, to his purpose: "Left to the freedom of its spiritual nature, the intellect strives to engender in beauty." For the present he merely accepts this as "the first ontologic root of the artistic activity" and observes that beauty is of no use and is "as transcendental and infinite as the universe of the intellect . . . thus the very end—transcendental end—intended pertains to the realm of the intellect, of its exultation and joy, not to the world of utility, and the intellectuality of art is in the fine arts (though more bound there with the sensitive and emotional powers) at a much higher degree than in the arts of the craftsman." This being the case, it follows that the rules in the fine arts "must be perpetually reborn . . . with respect to beauty to be participated in; and beauty is infinite . . . and the mirror [the artist] holds up to it is no bigger than his own heart. He is bound to go hunting a new analogate, a new typically different participation in beauty; and this new participation in beauty will involve and require new ways of making—either a new adaptation of the fundamental and perennial rules, or the use of rules not hitherto employed, which are simply new, and which at first disconcert people."

At this point it should be clear to the reader that "aesthetics" is not an appropriate word for Maritain's subject matter, and as a matter of fact it is a word he almost nowhere employs. Derived from the Greek for sense perception, it carries connotations that would restrict, and have restricted, the sphere of art in theory to but one of the components of art and not the essential one. The present book begins and ends with the assertion of the intellectuality of art; but with what richness of discrimination! For "the intellect or reason which plays the principal and royal part [in the arts] is not conceptual, discursive, logical reason, or even working reason. It is intuitive reason,

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in the obscure and high regions which are near the center of the soul . . . the working reason plays an essential and necessary—though secondary—part . . . not only secondary, but merely instrumental. As soon as it gets the upper hand, the work is but a corpse of a work of art—a product of academicism." Great artists like Valéry and Stravinsky who take pleasure in describing themselves as mere engineers in the manufacturing of an artifact "purposely do not tell the truth, at least not completely."

III. Now the fact is that Aristotle, in the Sixth Book of the Ethics according to Nicomachus, named the intuitive reason as one of the virtues of the intellect, a very important one, too, being that which grasps the first principles on the one hand and the concrete existent thing on the other; but Aristotle did not connect this virtue with the arts. It would appear that St. Thomas did, at least implicitly, and Maritain consistently does, but he does not at once disclose all that he means by it.

He opens Chapter Three with the statement that modern art—despite Valéry —"bitten by poetry longs to be freed from reason" and proceeds to an interpretation of this phenomenon. It is not only that art has felt itself threatened by "modern reason—a so-called reason as afraid of looking at things as it is busy digging in all the detail around them, and as fond of illusory explanations as it is insistent in its claim to recognize only statements of fact—the reason of those who believe that poetry is a substitute for science intended for feeble-minded persons. . . ." It is more than that, and "has to do with a typical aspiration of art in its own line and inner life, in so far as it has become conscious of itself during the last century to an unprecedented degree, and has found, at the center of this self-awareness, poetry, naked and wild poetry." In the effort to get free from the intelligible and the logical, art has been obedient in fact to that intuitive reason which is prior to logical reason. Maritain calls the effort of modern art a heroic undertaking, and distinguishes in it three lines of orientation. In Rouault, Chagall, Satie, Debussy, Hopkins and Apollinaire there is "pure, free and immediate passage into the work of the creative intuition." In Picasso the drive is toward creativity itself, a desperate and in the end a bitter struggle against the fact that "some inner content, received from elsewhere, is necessarily present." The third line is an aberrant one, toward self-deception—the orientation of Surrealism.

The discussion of Surrealism that follows is, I should suppose, final. Maritain characterises it as "a deliberate and systematic craving to deny the supreme autonomy of a power which is spiritual in nature, to reject everywhere and in every respect both the control of conscious reason and, even in its preconscious life, the superior intuitivity of the intellect, and to let loose the infinite powers of the irrational in man." The result, wherever the Surrealists truly achieved automatism, was not freedom but only dispersion, though at the same time Surrealist poetry was being "required to provide man with deceptive and flashy substitutes for science, metaphysics, mysticism, sanctity . . ." and as for Surrealist painting, it "restored in fact the most baneful and antipoetic tenet

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of academicism . . . primacy of subject represented. . . . The great trick was to represent things devised both to captivate the eyes and to wound and shatter at the same time the heart of the spectator, to disorganize him and destroy something in him, to catch him in a trap, by means of a certain monstrous contrivance suddenly revealed in the spectacle. . . ."

Yet in spite of all the imposture, "we must recognize the importance of the task achieved by Surrealism in calling attention to many *invidiosi veri* which the rationalist bias of our every day dealings, our classical teaching, our industrial civilization, and our moral prudery would prefer us not to see. The Surrealists were right in unmasking the part (not principal, but real indeed) played by the workings of the automatic or animal unconscious in the soul of the poet, and in emphasizing . . . the longing for the world of the marvelous, the availability of sensitiveness to all the allurements of chance. . . ."

It is by this path that Maritain reverts to Platonism for the dissent or rebuke that one has been expecting, and now he will make a great point of it. Plato, "like the Surrealists, though for opposite motives . . . totally separates poetic inspiration from reason. The myth of the Muse signifies that the source of poetry is separate from the human intellect, outside of it, in the transcendental eternal fatherland of subsisting Ideas. A conception which is akin, in the realm of art, to the Averroistic conception of the separate Intellect in the realm of knowledge, and which is responsible for that detestable idealism which has for so long spoiled the theories of philosophers on beauty." The solution is very direct—to make the Platonic Muse descend into the soul of man as creative intuition. This, Maritain tells us, is the very subject of his book.

"My contention, then, is that everything depends, in the issue we are discussing, on the recognition of a spiritual unconscious, or rather preconscious, of which Plato and the ancient wise men were well aware, and the disregard of which in favor of the Freudian unconscious is a sign of the dullness of our times." Neither, in fact, can be disregarded. "The notion of the psychological unconscious was made into a self-contradictory enigma by Descartes, who defined the soul by the very act of self-consciousness. Thus we must be grateful to Freud and his predecessors for having obliged philosophers to acknowledge the existence of unconscious thought." But the Freudian unconscious, which Maritain calls the animal or automatic or deaf unconscious, "the unconscious of blood and flesh, instincts, tendencies, complexes, repressed images and desires, traumatic memories" will not accommodate the Muse. Her seat must be the spiritual or *musical* unconscious or preconscious of the soul.

The wonderful principle invoked here is one which pervades Thomist philosophy: that logical, formal and indeed causal priority belongs to what is superior in grade of being. The unmusical cannot account for the musical. In the present case, "the universe of concepts, logical connections, rational discursus and rational deliberation, in which the activity of the intellect takes definite form and shape, is preceded by the hidden workings of an immense and primal preconscious life. Such a life develops in night, but in a night

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which is translucid and fertile, and resembles that primeval diffused light which was created first." The argument now runs through the Aristotelian and Thomist "psychology" concerning the formation of concepts. The necessity of explaining how phantasms and images originating in sensation could yield abstract concepts obliged Aristotle to posit the *intellectus agens* or Illuminating Intellect, as Maritain aptly calls it, which would permeate the images with its spiritual light and actuate or awaken the potential intelligibility in them. It is important to observe, as Maritain does not fail to do, that this is a postulated process, totally escaping experience or consciousness. He concludes: "Well, if there is in the spiritual unconscious a non-conceptual or preconceptual activity of the intellect even with regard to the birth of the concepts, we can with greater reason assume that such a non-conceptual activity of the intellect, such a non-rational activity of reason, in the spiritual unconscious, plays an essential part in the genesis of poetry . . ."

IV. With Chapter Four, entitled Creative Intuition and Poetic Knowledge, Maritain enters upon an extraordinary amplification of the foregoing outline—a treatise on the soul, but in particular the soul of the artist. He offers a diagram in which three pendent and concentric or converticate cones appear, one enveloping another; the exterior and broadest but shortest represents the intellect, the next and narrower but longer represents the imagination, and the central, narrowest and longest one represents the life of sensation. The automatic unconscious appears as a shaded core in these bells, reaching up through the volume enclosed by each to meet the preconscious of the spirit, which entirely fills the volume from the vertex downward about two-thirds of the length of the cone of intellect. The rims of the cones represent the loci respectively of formed concepts, explicit images, and sensations. Within the total volume there is circulation both up and down through all phases of sentiency and thought, conscious and unconscious and preconscious life; in particular, "all things seized upon by sense perception, all treasures of that sapid and sonorous and colorful Egypt, enter and make their way up to the central regions of the soul."

It is evident in this picture that, besides conceptualizing, "there is still for the intellect another kind of life . . . which is free, I mean free from the engendering of abstract concepts and ideas, free from the workings of rational knowledge and the disciplines of logical thought, free from the human actions to regulate and the human life to guide, and free from the laws of objective reality as to be known and acknowledged by science and discursive reason." And, "because poetry is born in this root life where the powers of the soul are active in common, poetry implies an essential requirement of totality or integrity. Poetry is the fruit neither of the intellect alone, nor of imagination alone . . . it proceeds from the totality of man, sense, imagination, intellect, love, desire, instinct, blood and spirit together . . ."

But this poetry is a form of knowledge. Maritain's statements here have great beauty. The poet "knows himself only on the condition that things

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resound in him, and that in him, at a single awakening, they and he come forth together out of sleep. . . ." It is not conceptual knowledge, but knowledge through connaturality or affective union. "Knowledge through connaturality," Maritain recalls, "plays an immense part in human life. Modern philosophers have thrown it into oblivion, but the ancient Doctors paid careful attention to it and established upon it all their theory of God-given contemplation. I think that we have to restore it. . . ." As to the poet, further: "His intuition, the creative intuition, is an obscure grasping of his own Self and of Things in a knowledge through union or connaturality which is born in the spiritual unconscious, and which fructifies only in the work. So the germ . . . tends from the very start to a kind of revelation . . . virtually contained in a small lucid cloud of inescapable intuition, both of the Self of the poet and of some particular flash of reality in the God-made universe. . . ."

Poetic knowledge therefore has the characteristic of tending to a work. It is at this point—a placement that I especially admire—that Maritain treats of the artist's emotion as entering into the work of art. The essential emotion, he discerns, is not an emotion to be expressed but an emotion which *causes to express*. It is emotion spiritualized, "because it is in the awakening of subjectivity to itself that emotion received in the translucid night of the free life of the intellect is made intentional and intuitive, or the determining means of a knowledge through congeniality." Passages such as this are supported by an extremely acute reading of what Baudelaire on the one hand and T. S. Eliot on the other have had to say about emotion in art. The emphasis both men put on the work itself is an emphasis Maritain would keep, for in the work alone "does poetic intuition come to objectivization. And it must always preserve its own consistence and value as an *object*. But at the same time it is a *sign*, both a *direct sign* of the secrets perceived in things, of some irrecusable truth of nature or adventure caught in the great universe, and a *reversed sign* of the subjective universe of the poet. . . . The work will make present to our eyes, together with itself, something else, and still something else, and still something else indefinitely, in the infinite mirrors of analogy. . ."

After this there are a number of careful pages on the precarious nature of the whole business. The work true to creative intuition will always be original, not a copy, even of a Platonic "creative idea" sitting like a model in the artist's mind. It may, however, lose touch with the intuition; "at the initial moment of the operative exercise, another process can take place. Then the poetic intuition becomes a craftsman's creative idea, losing its inherent transcendence and descending, as it were, into the mechanical noise and the merely intellectual concerns for manufacturing. . . . This phenomenon comes about . . . when man, in a hurry to display his own energy and to produce something great, or because poetic intuition is weak in him, goes *beyond* poetic intuition, and instead of listening to it, endeavors to supplement it in his own way. . . ." The intuition must be listened to, and if it is there will be more of it. "It is with the steady labor of intelligence intent on the elaboration of the form that the

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virtuality contained in poetic intuition actualizes and unfolds itself all along the process of production. And then the very exercise of artistic science and intellectual perspicacity, choosing, judging, cutting out all the nonsignificant, the fat, the superfluous, causes—precisely because it is always listening to creative emotion and appealing to it—new partial flashes of poetic intuition to be released at each step of the work." Finally, "As the mystic suffers divine things, the poet is here to suffer the things of this world, and to suffer them so much that he is enabled to speak them and himself out. . . . The degree of creative strength . . . is proportioned to the degree of depth of [his] attentive passivity."

V. The relationship between Poetry and Beauty, taken up briefly in Chapter Two, is now explored in Chapter Five as a prelude to important observations on Baudelaire and his successors. Maritain begins with the famous definition of St. Thomas, here given with somewhat more context than one usually finds quoted. I will render it freely and without authority: "There are three requisites for Beauty. The first is wholeness, or perfection . . . The second is due proportion, or harmony . . . The third is radiance or clarity [that is, the splendor of form]. With regard to the first, it bears a similarity with what is proper to the Son, insofar as the Son truly and perfectly contains in himself the nature of the Father . . . With regard to the second, it accords with what is the proper to the Son, insofar as He is the expressed image of the Father . . . With regard to the third, it accords with what is proper to the Son, insofar as He is the Word, which is a certain light and splendor of intellect . . ."

Maritain's gloss on the third requisite may be compared with the well-known passage in Joyce's *Stephen Hero,* as modified in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.* Here is Maritain: "If we were able fully to realize the implications of the Aristotelian notion of *form*—which does not mean external form, but on the contrary, the inner ontological principle which determines things in their essences and qualities, and through which they are, and exist, and act—we would also understand the full meaning intended by the great Schoolmen when they described the radiance or clarity inherent in beauty as *splendor formae,* the splendor of the form, say *the splendor of the secrets of being radiating into intelligence.* Thus the very words we are obliged to use—clarity, radiance, light, splendor—could be terribly misleading, if we came to forget that being is intelligible in *itself,* but not necessarily *for us,* and remains most often obscure to us, either because its intelligibility in itself is obscured in matter or because it is too high and too pure for our intellect. Descartes, with his clear ideas, divorced intelligence from mystery. Modern science is making us aware of his mistake. The Schoolmen, when they defined beauty by the radiance of the form, in reality defined it by the radiance of a mystery."

Further, "these notions are not univocal, but analogous notions. The beauty of a bunch of flowers or of a landscape is not the same as the beauty of a mathematical demonstration or the beauty of a generous act or the beauty

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of a human being . . . (because of the analogical community involved in beauty, they may happen surreptitiously to evoke one another in our minds—hence an ambiguity by which the poet will profit. . . .)" Likewise, beauty being a transcendental is not enclosed in any class or category because present in any thing whatsoever; in the eyes of God all that exists is beautiful, to the very extent to which it participates in being. But this is not the beauty which our senses perceive. *Aesthetic* beauty Maritain defines as "a particular determination of transcendental beauty . . . confronting not simply the intellect but the intellect and the sense acting together . . ." Hence, for our senses, the category of the Ugly exists; but art "endeavors to imitate in its own way the condition peculiar to the pure spirits; it draws beauty from ugly things and monsters, it tries to overcome the division between beautiful and ugly by absorbing ugliness in a superior species of beauty . . ."

Is beauty then the *object* of poetry? Or has poetry any object at all? Here the distinction between poetry and art is to be recalled, for it is true of art as it is of science that the creativity of the spirit is subordinate to an object—in the case of science, Being to be known, and in the case of art the object to be made. ("In this case," Maritain interposes, "the intellect, as in the Kantian system, creates its own object—but an *object to be made*, not an *object to be known*".) But poetry, the life of creative intuition, has no object and is free; for poetry, beauty is not an object but is what Maritain calls "the end beyond any end" and it "tends toward beauty, not as toward an object to be known or to be made, or a definite end to be attained in knowledge or realized in existence, but as toward that very life of yours which is in the one whom love has transformed into another yourself. . . ." So it engenders in beauty, as we were told in the Symposium, but it does not propose to *produce* beauty. In fact, "to the very extent to which the fine arts make beauty their object . . . they recede from beauty, and tend toward academicism . . . the proper perversion of the fine arts."

Surely there have been few more exalted and penetrating insights than this. And it is in the light of this that Maritain now considers that poet to whom more than any other he believes modern art owes its specific quality. "Baudelaire was aware, too aware, of the kind of transcendental indifference which beauty, as the end beyond the end of poetry, enjoys with regard to human things:

> *Tu marches sur des morts, Beauté, dont tu te moques;*
> *De tes bijoux l'Horreur n'est pas le moins charmant,*
> *Et le Meurtre, parmi tes plus chères breloques,*
> *Sur ton front orgueilleux danse amoureusement . . .*

He knew that beauty is one of the Divine Names. But the fact with which his own experience was obsessed and which his extraordinary power of perception made clear—and this event has a crucial significance for poetry in modern times—is that now this Divine Name is detached from God, and reigns *separate* in our human heaven. . . . But while descending into spiritual

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experience, one inevitably meets with the enigma of destiny, and with the prime questions and choices which hold sway over existence. By virtue of the option made in these depths, the spiritual experience of modern poetry has been ambivalent . . . it has here the countenance of the ardor in refusal, there the countenance of the ardor in acceptance. . . ." On the one hand, Mallarmé and Valéry; on the other, Hopkins and Claudel. "With Mallarmé and Valéry, the option for the rejection of transcendence taught modern poetry the experience of the void (and also, as concerns Mallarmé, a faint hope in magic). I wonder whether the Olympus of words to whose mysterious rites the great mind of Joyce dedicated itself did not emerge from some similar experience of the void—and a haunting memory of a lost paradise guarded by the sword of a fiery Irish angel."

In any case, and this is the point, modern poetry "cannot be judged and understood in the perspective of classical aesthetics and mere literature. We might as well ask a butterfly hunter to catch an octopus or a whale." It can be understood, and I believe is, in the perspective opened up by Maritain's terms. Suppose, he asks, that poetic knowledge not only becomes conscious of itself but takes itself as its own aim. What will be the result? The answer was given by Rimbaud, who wanted poetry to be absolute knowledge, that is, a science—something contrary to its nature. Or suppose that the poet, as not long ago it was thought that he might, elects to be myth-maker in the religious sense, to create his own metaphysical myths. The effort is self-contradictory, since having invented them he cannot believe in them. "A man lost in the night might as well invent an imaginary moon because he needs to have his way lighted." Surrealist poetry, trying the way of magical gnosis, "has become but an empty perceptivity, and the power of the void, which it enjoys, is able to develop in the senses a wonderfully acute taste, and to foster perfect despair. . . ." The conception of the literary art as an assault on the absolute, in the phrase of Jacques Rivière, has run the art of poetry into danger on every side. But Maritain has a way of viewing it that may help others to keep their balance: "Let us not forget, nevertheless, that all above-mentioned shifts and swervings are accidental disorders which thwart, conceal, and obscure in modern culture the great essential fact: the spiritual advent, not of the self-centered ego, but of creative subjectivity. Given the misery of the human condition, these disorders appear as a ransom paid to our weaknesses for the invaluable advance achieved in the self-awareness of art and poetry."

VI. For all the impure, egotistic and bogus adventures that have accompanied modern art, Maritain has a decisive scorn. In Chapter Six, largely devoted to contemporary painting, he speaks of those "avid followers who mistook Picasso's cruel hieroglyphs for animal frenzy. They have found in his lesson a means of releasing the resentments of a boorish soul and of getting at little cost the admiration of an idiotic public. They cling furiously to the human figure, but to make it into a putrid foetus or a disintegrated lizard or kangaroo armed

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with pincers and topped by a stupid eye or a fiendish set of teeth. . . . They are of interest mainly to anthropologists. . . ."

As for "abstract art", though he is grateful for the restfulness and balance achieved by Mondrian, for instance, he notes the fatal limitation accepted by this school: for it "breaks away from Nature as an existential whole, turns away from Things and the grasping of Things, and renounces seeing into the inner depths of the world of Nature, of visible and corporeal Being. . . . All in all, abstract art, taken as a system, is in the same predicament as idealist philosophy. Both are walled in . . . [and abstract art] winds up in a new sort of academicism. At last it becomes again possible to take painting easily. Thus it is that we are now offered in exhibitions, art magazines, and modern art museums—together with infrequent works whose genuine poetry recalls that of the originators, and with valuable achievements and inventions in the field of merely decorative painting—a gaudy multitude of convolutions, angles, or cobwebs and amoiboid or filiform mucosities, all of them meant to express the originality of the creative self, in pictures which lack personality to such a point that they can scarcely be distinguished one from another. Everyone joins in willy-nilly, spurred by the iron rod of imitation, fashion, and the art dealers. . . ."

Chapters Seven and Eight are concerned with progressively more and more concrete questions in the composition and understanding of poetry, and this discussion culminates in several flashing distinctions, as between the different modes in which creative intuition enters the work in classical and modern poetry, and between the purposive comparison and the illuminating image—a distinction like a blade that leaves rhetoric cleft from poetry proper in the matter of metaphor. I will not try to summarize these chapters, nor the daring and tenuous final meditation on the Three Epiphanies of Creative Intuition, because, for one thing, they are less amenable to such treatment than the earlier chapters, and, for another, these parts of the book above all the reader should discover for himself. Enough is now in outline here to support a provisional judgment on the critical importance of the work.

VII. It is to be foreseen that minds looking only to the logical articulation of argument—and the refinement of that approach has been a principal achievement of modern philosophy—will pick flaws in Maritain's book. He may be taxed with less than perfect consistency in the use of his terms, as in various statements concerning the relation between emotion and intuition in the creative process. The ordinary reader may find it odd that the automatic unconscious is described as "closed" and yet in ceaseless intercommunication with the spiritual preconscious. Even on professional scrutiny, however, I do not think many discrepancies of this kind will be turned up. The remarkable thing seems to me rather the degree of lucidity and coherence achieved in a region that has proved itself notoriously too much for philosophy. It is easy to maintain logical neatness in discussions of P and P_1 or the mortality of

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Socrates, but it is quite another matter to do so when the object of study is nothing less than the qualitative plenum of human expression.

In this connection, a second and still less sympathetic line of criticism can be foreseen. This is that free creativity has entered too much into a speculation that by its own rules should be bound by the object; that this admittedly beautiful mind has at times departed from the evidence offered in the arts and in artists as they actually exist in favor of spinning and playing with categories ethereal and remote in their relevance. Here again I should say, on the contrary, that the remarkable thing is the extent to which the whole discussion, from first to last, is anchored and grounded in specific reference to works of art and artistic testimony. It is true that the book moves from simple and fundamental principles to principles of a high and difficult order at the upper or outer limits of thought—principles, some of them, clearly enunciated here for the first time. I think the discoveries have taken place in the real and are therefore genuine discoveries.

In Maritain's own work this book comes as a corrective and fulfilment of his celebrated essay of thirty years ago, *Art and Scholasticism*. The philosophic points of departure remain the same, and the flame of sympathy with modern French poetry still burns. But there has been a tremendous development of range, both in the understanding and application of the thought of the classical and Christian philosophers and in perspective on the fields of art. English as well as French poetry and criticism, the novel and the drama as well as painting and verse are now brought into the study. Moreover, there has been a development in depth as well as in extension. In the earlier book, for example, the artist's intuition was referred to as synthetic and beauty was said to be the end of the fine arts; the intense and elaborate thinking on these topics in the present book is almost wholly new. In style, that tinge of perfervid rhetoric that one associates with Bloy has disappeared; in composition, the new book is larger, more rigorous, more spaciously ordered.

The conception of the spiritual preconscious, the preconceptual translucid night in which poetic intuition begins its musical stirring, is clearly related to that other night of the spirit first explored in the sixteenth century by the great mystics of the Church. Maritain's study of St. John of the Cross, in *The Degrees of Knowledge*, may be consulted as a possible source for this; there is also the recent type of depth psychotherapy known as "existential analysis", associated with Frankl of Vienna. Whatever its source, it is true to the experience that I judge most significant in the making of modern poetry. It is interesting to compare Maritain's exposition, by way of the *intellectus agens* or Illuminating Intellect, with that most influential and enthralling of nineteenth century notions on the subject, Coleridge's statement as to the Primary Imagination—"the living power and prime agent of all human perception . . . a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." It seems evident to me that Coleridge here as elsewhere lacked

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a vocabulary, a habit of distinctions, adequate to his profundity; that the Aristotelian and Thomist equipment was incomparably finer, and that Maritain's postulates, the Illuminating Intellect and creative intuition, equally preconscious in character, accord better with the mysteries in question than Coleridge's Primary and Secondary Imagination. Ambitiously but unfortunately mis-named, the Primary Imagination is easily misinterpreted as a self-consciousness privileged to make up what it shall perceive.

What David Jones calls The Break—that vast and disorienting temblor that we locate in the 19th century but have learned to see in premonitory fissures long before—was, among other things, a break with the tradition represented in this book. It was a real occurrence, not a lapse of terminology, and it was too deep and too necessary to be repaired by deploring it. If the tradition were to avail again, the Break would have to be embraced, with all its consequences, by a sympathy wide enough to contain it and strong enough in its discriminations of value to make anyone see that the tradition meant respect for the real, however painful, through all its changes. To this task this philosopher has given himself, and in this book to the task as it concerns the arts.

How effective is the effort? To me, *Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry* suggests the reconquest of a great country from the infidel. But grim reflection compels me to reduce this image: let me say rather that here at least a banner is carried clear across the field. Whether or not others can follow, whether or not the lands of art are to be recovered for the God-centered spirit, for humane philosophy, for the community and continuity of certain existential certitudes, as Maritain calls them, I cannot foresee, and in any case there is no obvious prospect of it at present. "The world today does not risk perishing," Maritain says, "through an excess of poetry, even poetry gone mad. And the big forces which tend both to the deification and the destruction of man . . . are in possession of singularly larger and more powerful means of realization." I do not know how the gallant and gracious power of a work like this can really tell against those forces. It is no doubt shallow and beside the point to wonder. Here is a standard; the wise and the honest, wherever they are among artists and others, can certainly repair to it.

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E. S. SELDON

A New Writer: The Marquis de Sade

THE MARQUIS DE SADE, An Essay by *Simone de Beauvoir* with Selections from His Writings Chosen by *Paul Dinnage*. Grove Press. $5.00.

FROM MME. DU DEFFAND in 1768 to Mme. de Beauvoir in the 1950's gossip about Sade's sex life has dominated nearly all discussion of his life and literature. Even so, bit by bit, an historical person, a "new" eighteenth century man of letters, is slowly emerging from the vaporous mists of legend in which the nineteenth century enveloped him. The question is, can Sade survive his legend and, after having served for generations as a symbol of irrational terrors, take up a commensurate place in the conventional literary and intellectual history of modern Europe?

This new Grove Press volume admirably introduces the American reader both to a new eighteenth century man of letters and to an old nineteenth century bogey-man. More than half the book consists of well chosen and well translated excerpts from Sade's principal works; the remainder consists of a translation of Mme. de Beauvoir's long essay, "Must We Burn Sade?", an excellent bibliography and a chronology of Sade's life. Wisely, I think, the editors have not burdened the selections with elaborate commentary, and passages they could not print in English they have left in French. Nearly every kind of writing Sade attempted is included: narrative and expository passages from the clandestine novels and dialogue; examples of his "public" fiction; a passage in which he situated himself with relation to his literary predecessors; an early reflection on a theme from eighteenth century philosophy; and, somewhat oddly, a highly untypical letter from the prison correspondence. Only his writing for the theater and his political tracts have been omitted. The translator has succeeded very well in catching the eighteenth century tone of the original and has been at pains not to tidy up Sade's fairly frequent lapses from correct grammar and syntax. While a few selections duplicate those to be found in Apollinaire's and Nadeau's larger collections of excerpts (in French), others do not.

As a glance at the bibliography alone will suggest, and as the variety of the selections translated here bears out, Sade took himself seriously as a man of letters. The officially acknowledged author of only two works of prose fiction published in his lifetime, *Aline et Valcour*, a "philosophical novel" published in 1793 as the work of Citizen S***, and *Les Crimes de l'Amour*, a collection of short stories published in 1800 as the work of D. A. F. Sade, "author of *Aline et Valcour*," he was also the author of four other works of fiction

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published in the same decade, anonymously and with false ascription of place of publication. It is upon the three novels and the philosophic dialogue whose authorship he dared not acknowledge in his own lifetime[1] that Sade's literary notoriety and influence as "the gray eminence of Romanticism" largely rest. Throughout the decade of the French Revolution, however, Sade also wrote a great many plays, only one of which was produced and published. During his last, long "administrative detention" under Napoleon I from 1801 until his death in 1814, he composed a number of historical romances and tales, some of which were confiscated and destroyed by the police, but many of which survive in manuscript today. Sade's is a sizable *oeuvre*, even if we limit ourselves to what has been published so far[2]; within it, the approximately four thousand pages of the banned works come to something between a third and a half.

What was the relation between the "clandestine" Sade and the "public" Sade? While the publishing history of the former works is still incomplete, it is clear that from the first they have enjoyed a success which has been denied the latter. The second and third editions of *Aline et Valcour* in 1795 were simply the remainder of the first edition, and the four volume novel has so far been reprinted only once, in 1883. Similarly, most of the stories of *Les Crimes de l'Amour* were until very recently only to be read in the first edition. After two editions in 1791, however, *Justine* went through at least five reprintings in the next ten years, not counting the appearance in 1797 of *La Nouvelle Justine*, a very considerable expansion and development of the earlier version, which forms the first four volumes of the ten volume "double" novel of Justine and Juliette. This latter work has not, possibly because of its size, been reprinted as often as the dialogue, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (which seems to have been reprinted at least once every fifteen or twenty years), but it has not been the less sought after for that reason. The first of Sade's "clandestine" fictions to be composed, but the last to be published, *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* has since 1904 gone through at least three editions in French and has been translated into German and English. Undoubtedly the success of Sade's clandestine fiction has been a *succès de scandale*, but after a hundred and fifty years it shows no sign of abating. Since 1945 a new wave of reprints has inspired a new wave of essays on Sade, and after a long, official silence the universities are beginning to require of graduate students that they learn Sade's name and dates.

The few pages from *Aline et Valcour* and from "Eugénie de Franval" (one of the stories from *Les Crimes de l'Amour*) included in this new Grove Press

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[1] *Justine, ou les Malheurs de la Vertu* (1791); *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* (1795); *La Nouvelle Justine ou les Malheurs de la Vertu* (1797); *Histoire de Juliette* (1797).

[2] To the clandestine fictions the twentieth century has added Sade's first, unfinished novel, *Les 120 Journées de Sodome* (1904), written in 1785. Besides reconstituting the original tale of Justine, *Les Infortunes de la Vertu* (1930), Maurice Heine also published a number of other short stories and previously unpublished pieces. His invaluable prefaces and articles have been collected in the volume: Maurice Heine, *Le Marquis de Sade*, Paris, 1950.

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volume, have been well chosen to bring out the closeness of Sade's themes in the public fiction to his themes in the clandestine fiction. While it should be pointed out that especially "strong" passages have been chosen, not typical passages, the editor reflects accurately the impressions of most readers who come to the public Sade only after some frequentation of the clandestine texts —that the former are somewhat pallid and evasive statements of themes expressed with much greater imaginative force and originality in the clandestine works. Despite their interest for the literary and intellectual historian, and more particularly for the student of Sade, *Aline et Valcour* and the stories of *Les Crimes de l'Amour* suffer from comparison both with the best of eighteenth century prose fiction before Sade, and with his own violent masterpieces.

Aline et Valcour has its admirers—Geoffrey Gorer is one[3] and the American author of a doctoral dissertation on Sade[4] is another—and it is true that the novel encloses, in the episode describing Zamé's utopian community, Sade's most "positive" and optimistic pages. But artistically the novel is disorderly—something none of the clandestine works is—never integrating its scattered narratives nor, alternatively, providing an organizing idea to permit us to complete the author's intention. If this were all Sade had written, we might very well see in him a minor literary continuer of the thought of the Enlightenment. However, as the "strong" passage here translated suggests, Sade expresses quite another view of the crime of sacrilege (which the episode depicts) than was typical of either the most atheistic of the *philosophes* or of traditional religious opinion. Oddly, it is what we should today call a psychosexual view. The Brigandos episode is picaresque and "folk" while other episodes echo Rousseau, Marmontel and a number of other writers. But in the Brigandos episode the nastiness of the sacrilege is gratuitous; we are not so much shocked as embarrassed.

Similarly with the incest theme of "Eugénie de Franval". Surely Sade must have realized that to expose so ugly a motive in a story of contemporary family life that otherwise slavishly imitates bourgeois literary idealizations of the period, was to write a satire or, at least, to demolish the genre once and for all? The question may not be one of Sade's possible hypocrisy in the public fiction but one of his literary innocence. This well-born author had spent much more time in the armies of Louis XV and in the prisons of Louis XVI than in the schoolroom or in the literary salons of Paris. So far as we know, the only man of letters he ever met was Mirabeau, whom Sade insulted on sight at a prison encounter in 1780. And it is important to recall that the stories published in *Les Crimes de l'Amour* in 1800 had all been written more than a decade earlier,

[3]Geoffrey Gorer, *The Revolutionary Ideas of the Marquis de Sade*, London, 1934.

[4]Robert E. Taylor, *The Marquis de Sade: A Man of the Enlightenment*, Columbia University, 1951.

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while Sade was still a prisoner of his family in the Bastille. However, like Sade's detractor Villeterque, who published a broadside detecting in the public author of *Les Crimes de l'Amour* the clandestine author of "the infamous novel of J———", what interests us in "Eugénie de Franval" is the original insight it contains: that a father's neglect of his wife and his ostentatious concern for his daughter may be due to a motive as simple and "natural" as it is inadmissible: a sexual attraction to the daughter. In his clandestine works Sade handled such shocking themes without literary embarrassment.

For Sade's peculiar genius was to have seized upon the weakest link in the logical chain which, modern intellectual historians assure us, led from the secular humanism of the Renaissance to the scientific naturalism of the twentieth century. Sade was just poorly enough educated, or sufficiently out of touch with the fashionable currents of his age, or both, to balk at that epistemological identification of (a particular) Reason with (a particular) Nature which is still, under many different philosophical disguises, a fundamental assumption holding the modern intellectual world together. I think it would be underestimating both Sade and the civilization which has for a century and a half both banned and read him, to suppose he was not in possession of a really unsettling insight such as this. For Sade is unsettling—in the clandestine works —and our formal educations have conspicuously omitted the historical fact that a century before *Sexualwissenschaft* and Freud, a French man of letters revealed with a clarity modern social scientists can only provide footnotes for, that any given Nature (within given limits) can be transformed to the requirements of any given Reason. Historically, Sade's insight is humiliating—ordinarily we do not find it a source of strength to reflect that we can, like Sade's heroes and heroines, conform to any pattern of criminal and sexually perverse behavior that may be demanded of us—but, philosophically, it is enheartening. The very cynicism with which Sade exposed our human potentialities for finite moral corruption also preserves our freedom, by rescuing us from the high-minded determinisms of historical naturalism. This is the meaning of Sade's revolt, of which so many brighter and more talented nineteenth century figures are the pale reflection: that modern man is free, at least, to be bad.

Of course, to sympathize at all with Sade's point of view, we have to value freedom above moral conformity. Perhaps it is for this reason that most published discussions of Sade turn on legal or psychiatric arguments which variously prove that Sade was bad. No man is really bad, however, who was capable as Sade was of the feat of justifying crimes like murder, sodomy, incest, theft, calumny and everything else you can think of by piecing together with what must have been very considerable industry the tag ends of eighteenth century libertarian thought: from Voltaire and Le Mettrie, Diderot and Holbach, Linguet and Montesquieu, and many others. It is the sort of argument against the spirit of the Enlightenment that the *philosophes* frequently tell us

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was constantly carried on by their clerical enemies—but of which modern historical research cannot discover many very impressive examples.[5] In the Minski episode from the *Histoire de Juliette,* the most nearly printable of Sade's more fantastic imaginative flights—translated, so far as possible, in this new volume —we discover a defense of cannibalism that renders obsolete twentieth century psychoanalytic studies of German fairy tales before most of them were written. The dialogue, *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir,* is a psychosexual strip tease of a brevity the late Otto Rank might have applauded: within a few hours a young girl is conducted so far beyond any ordinary sexual initiation that she does not merely "reject" an incestuous parental super-ego, she actively—indeed, "Sadistically"—disposes of it. It is characteristic of Sade's sardonic style in the clandestine works that he treats the whole episode as comic. In more typical passages of the clandestine novels, where Sade's *scélérats* gather together to explore methodically and chart systematically the biological and sociological limits of their freedom—two hours of theoretical preparation for every hour of laboratory work—the twentieth century reader discovers himself in the cellars of an eighteenth century Ministry of Love. Is it by eliminating Sade's name from modern literary and intellectual history that we have preserved ourselves so long from the terrible self-knowledge that certain totalitarian possibilities of modern naturalism, like the liberal possibilities we are prouder of, have their roots in the humane and philanthropic thought of the eighteenth century?

But the clandestine works have a literary superiority over the public works, as well as the advantage of carrying a serious insight to such "extreme" and, indeed, prophetic lengths. In all of them, from the unfinished *Les 120 Journées de Sodome,* written in 1785, to the last page of the 1797 double novel in ten volumes, Sade has constructed an imaginative universe of discourse altogether adequate to the originality and the grandeur of his vision. Sade's world is founded, not upon Leibnitzean or Newtonian perceptions of a pre-established harmony, not upon a neo-Stoic acceptance of custom as a "second nature", and not upon a subjective sentiment that morality is an intellectual order immanent in nature; to these fundamental beliefs of the Enlightenment Sade opposed a revelation of nature (including human nature) as mindless and convulsive, and a revelation of morality as a permanent "extreme situation" within human history, a perpetual warfare between historically determined "goods"

[5]According to R. R. Palmer, *Catholics and Unbelievers in Eighteenth Century France,* Princeton, 1939, the Abbé Bergier's *Examen du Matérialisme ou Réfutation du Système de la Nature* (1771) was the most serious clerical criticism. G. Lély, in a note to one of Sade's letters from prison in 1783, speculates that this may have been the "refutation" of Holbach of which Sade complained to his wife that he could scarcely be expected to appreciate it so long as she did not also send him the book being refuted. (Marquis de Sade, *L'Aigle, Mademoiselle . . .,* Paris, 1949, pp. 125, 209.) Another refutation of Holbach was that of Holland, a German Protestant, whose *Réflexions philosophiques sur le Système de la Nature* was printed at Lausanne in 1773.

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and "bads" whose actual conflicts spring from no moral source whatever, but from highly ambiguous (and ambivalent) psychosexual and socio-economic motives. Sade's narratives have only one subject-matter, the endless and perpetually unresolved conflict between the weak and the strong, and they project the thought of Callicles and Thrasymachus far beyond the philosophical and historical perspectives within which Plato situated it. What is so remarkable, from a literary point of view, is that Sade has succeeded in animating the fantastic personages of his systematic ideological ballet with vivacity and compelling imaginative interest. It is impossible to "like" either the vicious heroes and heroines or the neurotic victims of their appetites, but it is impossible not to recognize in both the most intimate elements of human character and culture, broken down and re-arranged into a forceful and original myth of mankind and human history. Reading Sade's clandestine texts is like taking some particularly vile-tasting medicine; the cure seems worse than any possible disease, but if you survive it you will have confronted the dark places of the soul, of your own soul, as rarely in literary history the occasion is offered.

There may well be a question as to whether Sade's clandestine texts constitute "literature" at all. Sade's literary achievement, as well as his intellectual one, bursts the seams of traditional critical categories: the evidence for this is the century and a half of Sade's censorship, during which time he has never ceased to be read, never ceased to be influential, never ceased to shock us. Mme. de Beauvoir is probably quite right when she says, ". . . no one would think of ranking *Justine* with *Manon Lescaut* or *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*." The juxtaposition is meaningless, in fact, because the question we ask ourselves after a reading of *Justine* is not a question that occurs to us after reading Prévost or Laclos. Is this *true?* we are obliged to ask, and urgently—for it is only too apparent that what we have been reading is neither "good" nor "beautiful" in any traditional sense. We may recall the curious argument with himself which Jean-Jacques Rousseau printed as the second preface to his first novel, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761). This was the novel, cast in the Richardsonian form of an extended correspondence among the principal characters, that became a European bestseller in the second half of the eighteenth century.

> N. . . . Is this correspondence real or is it a fiction?
> R. I do not at all see that it matters. To say whether a book is good or bad, is it of any importance to know how it was made?
> N. It is important for this book. A portrait is of some value, so long as it resembles an original, however strange. But in an imaginative picture every human figure must possess traits common to mankind, or the picture is valueless. If we assume they are both good, this difference remains; that the portrait will interest few persons; the picture alone will please the public.

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R. I follow you. If these letters are portraits, they are not interesting at all; if they are pictures, they are poor imitations. Isn't that what you mean?

N. Exactly.

. . .

N. But surely it is only a fiction?

R. And if it were?

N. In that case I have never read anything so depressing. These letters are not letters at all; this novel is not a novel; the characters are people from another world.

R. I could. . . . No, I see where your curiosity is tending. Why do you judge it in this way? Do you realize the extent to which men differ from each other, how opposed their characters can be; how widely customs and prejudices vary from time to time, from place to place and age to age? Who dares set precise limits to nature and say: Man is to be permitted to go this far, and no farther?

N. With such fine reasoning, unheard-of monsters, giants, pigmies, and chimeras of all kinds might be specifically admitted into nature: every object would be disfigured, and we should no longer have a common model of ourselves. I repeat it, in a picture of human nature every figure should resemble man.

R. I agree, on the condition that we should distinguish between the variety in human nature and that which is essential to it. . . .

This interesting passage, which the late Professor Becker quoted in another context[6], provides an eighteenth century vocabulary for the kind of problem Sade still poses us.

From a literary point of view, it is the problem of the imagination as a guide to truth, to autonomous revelation and prophecy; from a philosophical point of view, it is the problem of the relation between the formal literary work and the biographical—i.e., psychological and historical—elements that accompany or in some sense determine it. The particular shackles N. wanted to place upon Rousseau's literary imagination were of both varieties, although we need not here distinguish between the neo-classic (aesthetic) and the intellectualist (anti-historical) elements which blend ambiguously in Rousseau's usage of key-words like "original" and *humain, humanité*. In the twentieth century the shackles which literary historians and depth psychologists try to impose upon Sade's imagination are linked ambiguously in a formulation of "Sadism" which serves both to condemn it as aberrational (cf. Iwan Bloch and Mario Praz) *and* to lend a spurious historical-literary objectivity to what Krafft-Ebing merely proposed as a generic, descriptive term, but which depth psychologists have mythified as a mysterious and universal evil immanent in nature. This

[6]Carl L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers*, New Haven, 1932, p. 87.

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is not the place to subject the concept of *Sadismus* to historical review, but merely to note a certain continuity in ideological "determinations" of literature since the eighteenth century.

Rousseau's *alter ego,* of course, was merely the more traditional part of his own mind, and in breaking with "custom as a second nature" he was by no means letting loose freaks and monsters in the formal gardens of neo-classic nature. He was merely opposing the provinces to the capital and the court, and bourgeois ethical sentiment to aristocratic traditionalism and "artificiality". When Jean-Jacques listened to the voice of nature, it always spoke to him the language of an historical doctrine of Natural Law. The threat of monsters, giants and chimeras was merely logically necessary, not serious—only the year before all Paris had laughed when, in a comedy, a "philosopher of nature" was made to crawl about on all fours with a head of lettuce in his mouth. The same threat had occurred to Diderot, and he had treated it with even more peremptory logic in one of his articles for the *Encyclopédie.* What to do in the hypothetical case of a man who might refuse to identify nature with reason, in the light of the age's self-evident convictions? Such a man, Diderot said, would thereby be "dis-natured", would automatically cease to be a member of the human race. To take such a purely logical possibility seriously would have been to anticipate Sade—and such subsequent naturalistic concepts of the *dénaturé* as *Sadismus* and whatever is Russian for "ideological perversion".

*

It is only in the latter portion of Mme. de Beauvoir's sincere and searching essay, "Must We Burn Sade?", that she addresses herself to Sade as an historical problem, rather than as a threat to certain elements of her own intellectual and moral position. When she does so, however, it is to acknowledge the philosophical justice of Sade's critique of ethical "immanence" in eighteenth century naturalism, and thereby to make a valuable contribution to our understanding of Sade and his age. Similarly, despite the obliquity of her approach— ". . . it is neither as author nor as sexual pervert that Sade compels our attention: it is by virtue of the relationship which he created between these two aspects of himself"—she communicates as no one else has a conviction of Sade's moral sincerity and seriousness. If, perhaps, Mme. de Beauvoir's Existentialist Sade—school of Paris—reveals a less pressing cultural need than either the Surrealist Sade or Klossowski's Catholic Sade, it is not for that the less welcome. After a century and a half of evasions, it hardly seems possible that we can have too much light thrown upon what remains one of the most peculiar, and quite possibly also one of the most crucial, of the still buried chapters in our recent past.

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R. W. FLINT

The Genius of Hölderlin

HÖLDERLIN: POEMS, translated with a critical introduction by *Michael Hamburger*. Pantheon. $3.50. HÖLDERLIN: A Critical Study by *L. S. Salzberger*. Yale University Press. $3.50.

HERE ARE THE FIRST LONG STUDIES of Hölderlin published in this country. New Directions has put out some translations by Prokosch, and there is an English edition of selected poems translated by J. B. Leishman, Rilke's translator. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that except for the departments of German and a few of humanities, one of the half-dozen best German poets and one of the two most seminal poets of the German 19th century renaissance is still unknown in America. Except for Heine and Rilke, German poetry was largely ignored by the best translators of the last generation, and Hölderlin is a poet whose small but poignant quality consists in a particularly pure, direct relationship to the language as such. As a mind, he was well read and strictly trained, but as a poet he entirely lacked that wit and/or urbanity which made Goethe, Heine, George and Rilke more readily accessible to foreigners. Even in Germany his emergence as a recognized master was slow and somewhat undercover because of his failure to win the patronage of Goethe, a poet who recognized no rivals in Germany and is only now beginning to be treated with anything like candor. He also lacked the clear international standing which put Heine out of Goethe's reach. It was Schiller whom Goethe patronized; Hölderlin, who started by imitating Schiller and eventually surpassed him, had to wait nearly a century for recognition.

But the mystery behind this goes deeper than personal rivalry. Hölderlin could never have matched Goethe in the way Bach, for example, matched Handel. Though they were contemporaries (Hölderlin was born in the same year as Wordsworth and Beethoven), he stands to Goethe as Leopardi to Dante or Keats to Shakespeare, as a poet who spoke from the center of his culture with a perfect mastery of his own tongue but whose range, in comparison to the greater poet, is very much narrower. Nothing in Goethe surpasses the best of Hölderlin, though his total achievement is richer. In himself, in terms of tone and stance, Hölderlin most resembles Wordsworth, and it is here, in the great difference between the Wordsworthian lyric and prophetic mode and Goethe's special mixture of deliberate worldliness and naïveté, that the mystery lies. As men-of-the-world, Goethe and Heine have more in common with each other than either of them with Hölderlin, who was never known to have joked until he went mad.

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Goethe was the first and last modern German poet whose poetry was tempered by a sophisticated experience of the mores of power, who was himself a dilettante statesman in the 18th century tradition. He once remarked that he had had nothing to do with "die Philosophie im eigentlichen Sinn". However true that may be (in so devoted a reader of Spinoza) it seems to have been a necessary pose, as the last traces of Christian feudalism disappeared from Germany and left behind a national cult of philosophy. He was relatively untouched by the Lutheran anti-Roman indifference to power. Hölderin, on the other hand, had Lutheran parents, a pietist mother, and was educated at Tübingen in an atmosphere which mixed old-fashioned pietism and enthusiasm for the Classics in about equal measure. Out of this semi-rural atmosphere the philosophical awakening developed. Hölderlin had a good head for both philosophy and classical literature, for both enthusiasm and elegiac feeling; what he lacked at the outset and had to acquire by conscious effort was simply the personal standing on which to establish his poetry. Like Wordsworth, he spoke for the middle class that had not yet lost its sympathy for the pieties of the countryside, but being middle class, and without Goethe's pride of family or Heine's mixture of racial strains, he could neither play with folkish naïveté nor speak directly for the "folk" (in so far as such a thing still existed). His feeling had to release itself in elegy and visionary prophecy, supported by philosophy but never, at his best, vitiated by it.

Hölderlin's last thirty-six years were spent in a state of what has been diagnosed by Jung and others as schizophrenia, a pathetic but rather publicly picturesque insanity that attracted many visitors, to each of whom, addressing him as "Your Majesty", "Your Royal Highness", or "Your Holiness", (his only concession to medievalism) and signing himself "Scardanelli" or "Scaliger Rosa", he would give, with great courtesy, sometimes incoherent and sometimes poignant short lyrics in his best elegiac vein. (Most of these have been lost, but one at least, "Der Herbst", is very fine.) His critics agree that the remarkable thing about this insanity was the special sense in which it was a sacrificial fulfillment of his poetic character, no mere parable of the hard luck of poets, nor another example of the self-conscious *poète maudit*, but the inevitable result of his attempt to reconcile what was strongest in the mind of his time with what was most tragic in its experience. He became, in fact, a living example of Kant's dialectic without Kant's faith in science and categorical morality, and of Hegel's phenomenology of mind without Hegel's escape into a mechanical theory of history. Whether or not he really *had* to go mad is a question which invites sentimentality on both sides. It can be said with assurance, however, that no poet in a society which had so little use for the poet as an institution ever set his sights higher. Unlike Coleridge's, his loyalty was never seriously divided; he never confused poetry and philosophy. This in spite of the fact, as Mr. Hamburger claims on grounds I am unable

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to judge, that he was "certainly the equal" of Hegel and Schelling as a technical philosopher. In other words, he wholly lacked, as a thinker, that superstitious sense of the value of philosophy *per se* which we sometimes, forgetting such genuine cases as Lucretius, Dante or T. S. Eliot, grudgingly recognize in calling a man a "philosophical poet". At the same time, he was wholly involved in the post-Napoleonic awakening. One of his early friends described a meeting of the Tübingen poetry club: "We were well supplied with Rhine wine, and we sang our way through all the Songs of Joy in succession. Schiller's Song of Joy we had reserved for the punch-bowl. . . . The bowl stood steaming on the table and we were about to begin the song when Hölderlin begged us first to cleanse ourselves of our sins in the Castalian Spring. . . . We made our way through the garden and washed our faces and hands. 'This song of Schiller's', said Hölderlin, 'no one impure may sing!' Now we sang. At the stanza, 'This glass to the Good Spirit', tears came into Hölderlin's eyes; full of enthusiasm he held his glass out of the window and roared, 'This glass to the Good Spirit' into the open air, so that the whole Neckar valley re-echoed."

How was this cult of joy given poetic color and movement? First of all, surprisingly perhaps but also inevitably for a poet with Hölderlin's capacity for suffering, as elegy.

Wie mein Glük, ist mein Lied.—Willst du im Abendroth
Froh dich baden? Hinweg ists, und der Erd' ist kalt,
Und der Vogel der Nacht schwirrt
Unbequem vor das Auge dir[1].

This elegiac note is purest in his well-known "Hyperions Schiksaalslied", but it also colors those memorable early poems in Alcaics, "Abendphantasie", "An die Hofnung", "Der Abschied" (third version), "An die Parzen", "An Diotima" (Diotima was Hölderlin's pseudonym for his single, intense and tragic love-affair, Susette Gontard, the wife of a banker whose children he tutored), and the grave, radiant "Menons Klage um Diotima" in hexameters. Rather than quote one of the long poems piecemeal, I will restrict myself to "An die Parzen", a poem which renders his quality as fully as anything he wrote.

Nur einen Sommer gönnt, ihr Gewaltigen!
Und einen Herbst zu reifen Gesange mir,
Dass williger mein Herz, vom süssen
Spiele gesättigt, dann mir sterbe!

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[1] I give Mr. Hamburger's translations; the German version is given in Hölderlin's Swabian dialect. From "Die Kürze",

Like my joy is my song.—In the red summer's glow
Would you bathe and be gay? Gone it is, cold the earth,
And the bird of the night whirs,
Swoops down awkwardly to your eyes.

This is one of Mr. Hamburger's least effective translations. It entirely misses the excitement of "schwirrt" followed by the expressive "unbequem"—uneasy, uncomfortable.

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Die Seele, der im Leben ihr göttlich Recht
Nicht ward, sie ruht auch drunten in Orkus nicht;
Doch ist mir einst das Heil'ge, das am
Herzen mir liegt, das Gedicht, gelungen

Willkommen dann, o Stille der Schattenwelt!
Zufrieden bin ich, wenn auch mein Saitenspiel
Mich nicht hinabgleitet; einmal
Lebt' ich wie Götter, und mehr bedarfs nicht.[2]

(I am sure the pun in the last line was unintentional.) Here is certainly a new note and a new diction in German, not the folkish pathos of "Du, du, liegst mir im Herzen . . ." but the sweet-tempered gravity and tight fluency of Gluck's neo-classic operas, the interpenetration of classical form and a modern idiom you find in the best of Campion or Landor. It has more weight in the perspective of German poetry than Campion or Landor have in English. Mr. Hamburger suggests what is to me a weak analogy to the poetry of Chénier, Leconte de Lisle or Hérédia. The French neo-classicists were only such by virtue of subject; the single line was still their principal unit of meaning. Hölderlin provides a new way to listen to the German language.

From here to the looser prophetic poems in hexameters and Pindarics is not as long a journey as it might seem. He had to steer his way between a static Schilleresque *Schwärmerei* on the one hand and over-abstraction on the other. "I lack facility more than strength, *nuances* more than ideas, manifoldly ordered sounds more than a keynote, shadows more than light . . ." he wrote to a friend. It was not that he grew more philosophical as he grew older, but that the tension implicit in his double allegiance to the Bible and the Classics became increasingly available to him as experience and hence as poetry. In his prophetic poetry he assumes that the two can be poetically reconciled, not in the Miltonic manner, but in terms of a set of arbitrary symbols which oddly resemble Kafka's avatars of divine power and grace. "Patmos" is the most ambitious and successful of these poems, the most personal, most coherent,

[2] "To the Fates".

Only one summer grant me, O mighty ones
And but one autumn leave me for mellow song,
So that my heart with its sweet playing
Sated more willingly then may perish.

The soul to which in life its appointed rights
Were not vouchsafed in Orcus too cannot rest;
Yet should what I deem holy, cherish
More than all else, should my verse grow perfect,

Most welcome then, O stillness of shades below!
Content I shall be, though music of my strings
Do not escort me down; for once *I*
Lived as the gods live, and that suffices.

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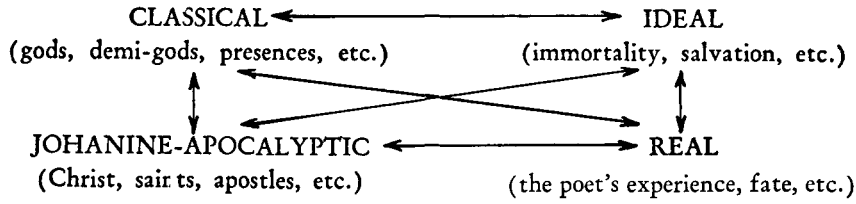
most richly figured and best modulated. Like Wordsworth's *Intimations Ode*, it is strictly *sui generis*, the kind of poem that would be unimaginable unless it existed, impossible unless it were also very good. As for its idea-scheme, a simple diagram should help.



As I hope to have indicated, the traffic between symbol and idea is continuous and "contrapuntal". That is, Hölderlin makes no simple equations between any two sets of his poetic counters, as, for example, between the ideal and the Biblical or the real and the Classic. His only certainty is that of the poem itself, its realized feeling and the prophetic conclusions it draws. Erich Pryzwara, the Catholic theologian, in his useful study of Hölderlin's ideas (still untranslated) shows how his step-wise system of values, Greece, Germany, the West and Asia, culminates in a vision of Christ as "das Abendland in seinem letzten Geheimnis". This is Hopkins's Christ who "plays in ten thousand places . . .", the living principle of holiness suffering under God; He is also the last of the classical divine presences, as much a destroying fire as a reconciler, the Heraclean figure of Michelangelo's Last Judgment. "Wie Fürsten ist Herkules, Gemeingut Bacchus, Christus aber ist das Ende." Heracles is prince, Bacchus is common welfare, but Christ is the end.

Any critic might succumb to grandiosity in analyzing this really very sober, ingenuous and limited poet, and so end by offering the reader an irreproachably lifeless cultural monument, a shining knight of the Humanities. Like Wordsworth he doubtless now and then engages in an almost indecent traffic with the Right Attitudes. And, indeed, like neo-classicism in any form, of whatever century, whether it take Horace or Pindar as its model, he is only a phase, a formal experiment capable of great charm and great banality. If he had not been the most ingenuously German of poets who could make use of the folk-song tradition and its accepted naïvetés, not *as* folk-song but in his own way, he *would* have been a considerable bore. The worst one can say of his hymns and odes is that they sometimes fall into a "touching and artless piety" (Mr. Salzberger's words) that cannot engage us very deeply.

But that such a poet could have been the rejuvenator of German diction, who made possible the lapidary richness of George and the long, free, varied line of the *Duino Elegies*, is the prime interest for the critic. Without his epithets, his feminine endings, his inversions, his fluency within the verse paragraph, his quantitative stretching and weighting of the line, and his precise

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ear, the work of his two great 20th century disciples would have been quite different.

Mr. Hamburger's is the book I would turn to first. His critical introduction is thorough and seems generally sound (though he perpetuates the idea that Wordsworth actually *did* restrict his language to a popular idiom. Hölderlin had no sentimental theory of language, was more concerned with the divine-human traffic, had less capacity for suggesting terror or surprise; but more important than these differences, I think, are their similarities of stance and tone). He provides nearly all the mature and worthwhile poems, and gives translations which are excellent as such without larger ambitions of their own. Mr. Salzberger gives very little of the poetry and is mainly concerned with ideas. His book would merit higher praise and more careful notice were not Mr. Hamburger's better. Both critics have the advantage of a deep sympathy with their subject and a sophisticated sense of how the poetry transcends his limitations as man and thinker.

NORTHROP FRYE

Art in a New Modulation

FEELING AND FORM, by *Susanne K. Langer*. Scribner's. $7.00.

THIS BOOK IS DESCRIBED on the title-page as "A Theory of Art Developed from *Philosophy in a New Key*." It will doubtless become, like its predecessor, something of a general favorite, as it continues to show that Mrs. Langer is a highly readable popularizer of philosophical ideas, especially the ideas of Cassirer, to whose memory the book is dedicated. The style assumes the privileges of a public character: it is breezy, good-humored, colloquial, and occasionally swashbuckling. It is a refreshing change from the sort of aesthetics that either begins, like old-fashioned ethics, with some highly provincial legislation about what art ought to do, and then goes on to smear the art that doesn't do it, or else, in struggling to reach some vast generalization about what art as a whole *does* do, passes over its infinite variety of moods and experiences.

There are two opposed but equally indefensible views about the relation of art to reality. One is the vulgar conception of "imitation" as directly reproducing the outer world or an inner experience. According to this view painting is essentially representation, dancing the direct expression of what the dancer really feels, and so on. The other is the conception of art as make-believe or

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magic which produces a trance-like state by a deliberately raised hallucination. The golden mean of Mrs. Langer's argument is a conception that she calls semblance or illusion, and identifies both with the German term *Schein* and with Aristotle's mimesis. She avoids the latter word because, she says, it is too close to the representational fallacy. One would think that "illusion" was at least as close to the trance-fallacy, but Mrs. Langer seems content with it, and distinguishes the trance-fallacy as *de*lusion. Thus painting is a spatial art, but it is neither a representation of real space, which is not pictorial, nor does it belong in a separate spatial world which is not real. It is the illusion or semblance of space, or what Mrs. Langer calls "virtual" space.

Mrs. Langer goes on to show that the major arts can be classified according to the virtual fields that they occupy. As painting presents virtual space, so music presents virtual time, which, like Wyndham Lewis before her, she links with Bergson's *durée réelle*. Verbal art, or what she calls poesis, she divides into literature proper and drama. The former is a semblance of the past, or virtual memory, the latter a semblance of the future, virtual act or destiny. Sculpture is the semblance of organic form; architecture gives her more trouble, but is finally called an "ethnic domain". Dance—this is perhaps the sharpest of her insights—is a field of virtual power: it presents the illusion of human life as force or physical energy, which explains why it is so dominant an art in primitive society, where the mysterious powers of gods or of magic are central data of imaginative experience. The film Mrs. Langer believes to be a new art—she mentions the shadow plays of Turkey and Java, but evidently does not regard them as affiliated—and what it presents is virtual dream, the semblance of apparition. Because of the difference in virtual fields, two arts are never, in work of major importance, united on equal terms: one art absorbs the other, as music in Wagner absorbs poetry. She calls this the "principle of assimilation".

The function of art is to objectify feeling by creating symbols for it. By a symbol Mrs. Langer does not mean something that directly represents a feeling, in the way that a frown represents displeasure, which she calls a symptom. Recognizing a symptom is well within the orbit of the conditioned reflex, as a dog may recognize the symptoms of anger or affection in his master's voice. The work of art is its own object, standing for itself, and unattached. Just as a name like James or John can be understood as a name apart from the people it may belong to, so a work of art can articulate or express a feeling which is a part of our total experience, whether it happens to be exactly the feeling that the artist or his audience has recently been preoccupied with or not. Understanding symbolism on this level is the prerogative of human consciousness, and the work of art is the emotional counterpart of the discursive or logical symbol on which reasoning is based. Art has, therefore, an educational importance parallel to science: it delivers us from the tyranny of inarticulate

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feeling, and it disciplines our sensibilities just as logic disciplines our thinking.

I see no fallacy or inconsistency in the theory itself, which may be more familiar, at least to literary critics, than Mrs. Langer realizes. The development of it, and the resulting shape of the book, have some disappointing features. The main idea is used more as a touchstone than as a central assimilating form: it is brought in to the discussion of each art in turn and used to refute much the same fallacies in its criticism. One misses specific discussion of great works of art, and gets too much general discussion of other critics' ideas. Sometimes this is effectively done: writers on the dance, for instance, at least the ones she quotes, seem to be a pretty inarticulate lot, and Mrs. Langer shows great tact and sympathy in translating their mooings into something more intelligible. But on the whole she is at her best when she throws the other critics away and works out an idea of her own. For instance, she interprets comedy and tragedy as expressing, respectively, the sense of the unquenchable exuberance of life and the sense of life as a contained pattern enclosed by death. These she calls the rhythms of fortune and of fate. She then seizes on the figure of the buffoon or fool as the central symbol of aggressive vitality in comedy, and the writing immediately takes on a concreteness which is often wanting elsewhere.

The least satisfactory part of the book, to me, is the section on literature. Here again she quotes critics, and the reasons for selecting the critics are not easy to follow. Her theory of literature is one that would give a good deal of importance to Proust, but instead of quoting Proust, who is always very precise when he explains what he is trying to do, she quotes some phrases from Clive Bell's book on Proust that slither around in the mind like greased weasels. She gives a curious picture of contemporary critical problems. Not all literary critics today are as confused about their subject as George Moore or Brander Matthews, and many of the matters discussed—pure poetry, significant form, the communal composition of ballads, the poetic validity of T. S. Eliot's allusiveness—are pretty dead issues by now: dead because they were never central. There is a chapter called "The Great Literary Forms", but no serious attempt is made in it to discuss the problems of literary genre. She seems ill at ease with the subject, and we find that different questions are apt to get the same answer, and that a rather circular one. Why is direct narration often useful in describing the events of prose fiction? "Because it projects them at once into the experiential mode, and assures their essentially literary form." Why may a work of non-fiction, such as an essay, be called literary? Because, "whenever it is well done, it meets a standard which is essentially literary, i.e., an artistic standard."

Mrs. Langer has deliberately adopted "the practical rule of treating a problem that belongs to several arts only in connection with the one which exhibits it most perfectly". That is, she believes in the unity of art, but discusses one

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art after another, and so what are really unifying principles emerge in different contexts. This puts a considerable strain on the reader: it is all very well to be promised another book in which such principles will be systematically treated, but one would like a few more cross-references in this one. The "magic circle" of the round dance is the same motif as the *temenos* or marked-off holy ground in architecture, but this point is only casually suggested through a quotation. The principle of the informing cause or "commanding form", as she calls it, is a major issue in literary criticism today, but here it is discussed only in connection with music. Again, the principle that music deals with virtual time and literature with virtual memory could be used to explain how repetition, of a kind that would be intolerable in poetry by itself, can be a structural principle of music. Some reference to this would, I think, have made her discussion of song and opera considerably clearer. She raises the question of the motif in painting, giving the rosette as her example, but passes over the question of literary motif in legend and myth, saying merely that these are "not art at all, but fantasies". She speaks of "the gratuitous and silly problem of the spectator's credulity" in the criticism of drama, but discusses the same problem at some length in connection with prose fiction.

As every poet knows, one cannot use a word without being affected by its traditional associations, and as long as "illusion" is used as a central idea about art, it will have the overtones of something opposed to "reality", and will not cut itself loose from delusion or the acceptance of the unreal. Mrs. Langer says, for instance, "All forces that cannot be scientifically established and measured must be regarded, from the philosophical standpoint, as illusory." The question involved here is not her taste in using the word, but her conception of "art", which seems to me to have something of what is called misplaced concreteness about it. Conceived as objectified feeling alone, art is seen only as something that interrupts or displaces reality, not as a permanent part of a world constructed by humanity out of reality. The argument is weakened by a persistent attempt to separate art from its own social functions. True, Mrs. Langer says, not only that art is a unity, but "that there are no higher and lower, partial and supplementary arts", which means that the difference between pure and applied art cannot be established either. And though, speaking of the relation of poetry to discursive writing, she says "I maintain that the difference is radical", when she stops maintaining things and looks at her data she is willing enough to admit that prose fiction belongs to literature, that it may use "just the same discursive language we use for conversation", that it is inseparable from the "great literary order" of non-fiction, and that the transition from fiction to true exposition "may at times be a fluid transition"—in other words there are no boundary lines, and consequently no radical differences. But the main tendency of her argument is to insulate art as a thing by itself.

It is in architecture that this is most difficult to do. Mrs. Langer says that

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utilitarian factors in building, such as heating, are not architectural elements, but prudently adds a footnote saying that the architect ought not to ignore them. However that may be, it seems wrong to speak of the Empire State Building as in any sense an "illusion", and I do not understand the distinction, if she is making one, between a virtual and a real ethnic domain. In short, all the arts show us, architecture most vividly, that there are two orders of reality: the world that nature presents to us, and the world that human society constructs out of it, the world of art, science, religion, culture and civilization. Architecture is bound up with the idea, not simply of buildings, but of the city. Mrs. Langer says "a world created as an artistic image is given us to look at, not to live in, and in this respect it is radically unlike the neurotic's 'private world.' " But the difference between neurosis and art is the difference between a private and a public world. If we think of such words as culture or civilization, we can see that we do in fact live in the world created as an artistic image. It is because of its clear reference to two orders of nature in human life that Aristotle's word mimesis seems to me a safer guide than even the most cautious use of illusion or semblance.

Reservations about Mrs. Langer's arguments do not add up to anything like a rejection of them. *Feeling and Form* was obviously never designed to be monumental and definitive, but to explore and search and raise new questions. In this it succeeds admirably: it is a thoroughly likeable and candid book, and as far as its appearance in the contemporary critical scene is concerned, a reviewer has nothing to do but spread out a welcome mat.

GERALD WEALES

Strike Through The Mush!

SHAME AND GLORY OF THE INTELLECTUALS, *by Peter Viereck.* Beacon Press. $4.00.

DON QUIXOTE USED TO ATTACK ONE WINDMILL at a time. Those odds are not good enough for Peter Viereck in his new book with the autobiographical title, *Shame and Glory of the Intellectuals.* He whirls like a dervish, striking in all directions at once as if afraid that someone from the political or literary right or left will slip by his guard and run him through. He need not worry. One of the requisites of a stabee is that he have substance.

At the center of Viereck's book—if an olio can be said to have a center—lies his militant anti-Communism and his demand for a return to values. The

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author shows an unfortunate uncertainty about what he is to do with these central concepts; sometimes he sounds as though he were organizing a crusade around them; sometimes, as though he were gathering them to his bosom like some untouchable personal treasure. As crusade organizer, he grabs the reader by the lapel and shouts like an intellectual top sergeant, do this! don't do that! More often, however, he seems to be playing an elaborate game of King of the Mountain in which he, since he is always right, stands on the crest and pushes down anyone who approaches his position. He attacks the intellectual for moral laxity, but the anti-intellectual, whom perhaps he should greet as brother, is kicked off Viereck's mountain for not being sufficiently respectful toward the intellect. He labels liberals anti-Catholic and then proceeds to damn the same censorial restrictions, such as the ban on *The Miracle,* which have given liberals and men of good sense cause for protest; but Viereck's damnation is not anti-Catholic, it is just downright speaking out for truth and freedom. He admits to a predilection for Christianity that is coupled with doubts about specific doctrine; yet he is completely sincere, whereas those lately convinced intellectuals are "parlor Christians". His anti-Communism embodies a strong opposition to Russia and Russian aggression—which puts him on rather crowded common ground if he will but look around him—but he is against both containment (which he seems to have favored three years ago when he wrote *Conservatism Revisited*) *and* war. There do not seem to be many other alternatives, but he outlines one which turns out to be the containment-plus policy that is the present practice of the United Nations in Korea and of the United States with the Marshall Plan and the Voice of America. He is deeply involved in a search for values or a return to them, but he is likely to view sceptically anyone who is doing a little value-searching with relativism or pragmatism as a point of departure, although certainly these two philosophical points of view have their origins in what he, in a burst of hyphens, likes to call the "Christian-Hebraic-Roman-Hellenic amalgam". Although Viereck strews the pages of his book with quotations, perhaps to prove that he has read as widely as Robert Burton, he, since he is attempting to bring order to the moral and intellectual confusion that he sees around him, wisely leaves out this one from Dante: "Worthy of much blame is the thing which being appointed to remove some special defect, itself induces the same."

Although Viereck attacks indiscriminately, the greatest force of his anger and his wit, which more often becomes cuteness, is aimed at a creation of his called Gaylord Babbitt. This character was invented in 1947 for a projected novel; if the chapter "The Table Talk of Gaylord Babbitt: An Exclusive Interview in Cafe Chic" is an example of what the whole was to be, it is perhaps as well that it was never written. He has constructed Babbitt Junior out of cocktail conversation which appears to be more indicative of the kind of parties Viereck attends than anything more general. His Babbitt is the new Philistine,

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the wishy-washy liberal who parrots the Stalinist line and the artsy aesthete who parrots the avant-guardist line; Alger and Ezra are the symbols. If such a creation ever existed as a real intellectual force, he was killed in action in World War II. If he is the facile, fatuous creature that Viereck makes him out to be, a man who plays on the fringe-edge of art, thought and politics and affects to be at the center of all three, then Viereck errs in defining the intellectual tenor of the times in terms of him. It would be easier to attack English culture at the end of the 17th century using Sir Fopling Flutter as symbol than it would using Isaac Newton, John Bunyan or John Locke; so Viereck has his Gaylord Babbitt.

Most of the political sins of the intellectual that Viereck holds up in horror are now two decades old, sins of the thirties long since confessed in books such as *The God That Failed;* attempts have been made at atonement. Although Viereck occasionally nods toward the sincerely anti-Communist liberals, he implies—with his precious Babbitt—that the majority of writers and professors are Russian apologists, largely because they attack with force such things as McCarthy and teachers' oaths, which Viereck also attacks with force—but his attack is part of his anti-Communism.

Artistically, Viereck is all for form—he says so again and again in this formless book—and clarity. He is to lead a neo-classical revolt against the prevailing romanticism (of Eliot maybe?). The villains are the avant-guardists, the wilful obscurantists, the new critics; and their home and comfort lies in the Little Magazines. Viereck as poet, however, has appeared in all the little magazines and literary reviews from *Botteghe Oscure* to *Poetry and Poverty*[1]; yet his poetry is not particularly obscure (although he uses a footnote to explain a poetic reference in "Crass Times Redeemed by Dignity of Souls", the poem he uses as credo for the book under discussion) and is not very often poetic. He even joins the little-magazine attacks on that vulgar, middle-brow *New Yorker*, which has also published his poetry. But it is not just the return to poetic form that he is heralding, he is also leading the revival of our humanistic heritage against mass-production humanists like Mortimer Adler and against all book-burners; to protect this heritage from the inroads of mass-culture, he suggests burning the television sets.

Politely the book is chaotic; actually it is a mess. At one point Viereck says positively that there is a basic unity, but these words must be his uneasy recognition that the book is simply a catchall. It is made up of a few long essays, some things that look like first drafts of essays, some aphorisms, some puns, some jottings, seldom in complete sentences, that look as though they might have been transcribed from the backs of old envelopes. If there is one idea central to Viereck's book, it appears to be this: *Never throw anything away;*

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[1]THE HUDSON REVIEW is one exception.

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someone may publish it. In fact, it may be published several times. All that Viereck has to say about the new conservatism he has said already in *Conservatism Revisited;* even he seems to recognize this for he lifts whole sections from the earlier book and publishes them word for word in this one. He is also so taken with some of the turns of phrase that he has used in his poetry, particularly in the last volume *The New Morning,* that he moves them into the body of this new book where they wave their exclamation points proudly as though they had just now sprung excitedly from his brain. That Viereck chose to publish this book, which is a re-hash of his earlier volumes of prose and poetry, a collection of disparate quotations and an unassimilated mass of angry ideas, makes us less interested in the values and the integrity that he appears to be peddling than in the motives that make this academic Sammy run.

Shame and Glory of the Intellectuals is enthusiastic without order, is clever without wit, is morally indignant without real morality or genuine dignity. At one point Viereck says, "Clarity and reasonableness more exciting than visceral enthusiasm or sublime vagueness." Yes, Viereck, for God's sake, yes!

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